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Gregory Alexander. Gill
University of Windsor

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**Message and Context: A Study of Political Information Use
In the 1993 Canadian Federal Election**

By Alexander Gill

**A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
Through the Department of Communication Studies
in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Master of Arts at the
University of Windsor**

**Windsor, Ontario, Canada
1994**



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Abstract

Message and Context: A Study of Voter Information Use in the 1993 Canadian Federal Election

This thesis examined where a small group of voters obtained their political information during the 1993 Canadian federal election. It adapted a new qualitative method for use in a longitudinal study, using non-leading interviewing techniques and barometer opinion forms to capture how collaborators perceived the election campaign on a weekly basis. A wrap-up interview was also conducted to allow collaborators to reflect back on the campaign.

Media sources - especially television - were mentioned most often by collaborators. Interpersonal sources of information were mentioned less often, but were treated in a different manner by members of the study group. Television information was mentioned briefly, and when collaborators did go into detail, they spoke in terms of the appearance and mannerisms of the candidates. If the collaborators had a direct encounter with one of the local candidates, however, it usually had a very powerful impact. Finally, collaborators attributed changes in their feelings over the campaign to media information when they talked about national figures and parties, but used interpersonal sources when they talked about candidates in their riding.

DEDICATION

To my friends and family - especially my mother. They often wondered why I went back to school but supported me nonetheless. For that I am thankful.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my thesis advisor, Dr. Richard Lewis, for his wise guidance and ready perspective through a process that became quite stressful at times. Dr. Hildebrandt and Dr. Soderlund were also quite helpful, always ready to offer advice without any motivation other than that of improving the finished product. The fact that the thesis is what it is due in large part to their recommendations and patience.

The secretaries of the Department of Communication Studies - especially Ann Gallant - deserve a special thank-you. They endured my constantly irreverent presence with good humour, although I'm sure I often gave them cause to be quite irritated.

My fellow Graduate students played an important part in motivating me to finish, especially my fellow members of the "hard luck" thesis lunch club. Cathy Wiley and Elizabeth Polachok were always there for a Friday lunch, to lend a sympathetic ear or throw together a wager for a real incentive. Thanks, guys - now get a life.

My partners in the Advertising Research Project were also quite helpful. I thank Dr. Cunningham for his philosophical guidance, Dr. Romanow for his encouragement early in the game, and Dr. Surlin for his incredibly bad sense of humour. And last, but not least, I would like to thank Dr. Thomas Carney for his brilliance and unorthodoxy - it was a true inspiration.

Ethics Statement

This study has been reviewed and has received clearance through the Department of Communication Studies Ethics Committee. Questions concerning this study should be addressed to the office of Research Services.

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Chapter One

Introduction

Purpose

This thesis examines where a small group of voters obtained their political information during the 1993 Canadian federal election. Specifically, it followed nine voters in the riding of Windsor-Lake St. Clair through the 1993 federal election using non-leading personal interviews.

The consensus in most studies of political information use tends to emphasise the media - particularly television - as primary sources of political information. Accordingly, a great deal of attention has been devoted to variations on this assumption in a number of fields, including social psychology and persuasion, political science, and communications (Milburn, 1991). The vast majority of such studies use quantitative research methods, beginning with an assumption that the media are the main sources of information and proceeding from there to examine one aspect of their use (Graber, 1984). Such an approach is based on numerous assumptions, chief amongst them that the individual is a rational processor of information who sits at the end of a linear flow of information.

The role of factors specific to individuals and their environment in the spread and dissemination of messages may be an important variable which is overlooked in more traditional studies of political information use, and other variables may be present which have not emerged through conventional research techniques (Katz, 1960; Graber, 1984). This

investigation adapts a new qualitative research method (Carney, 1990) known for its non-intrusive technique to determine where the members of the study group got their information and how different information sources may be related to one another.

Rationale

Communication and politics are inexorably linked. The act of governing is itself a form of communication on a very large scale - a process which sees policy initiatives from governing actors, citizens and advocacy groups interact over the course of a government's mandate (Dye and Zeigler, 1981). The election from which a mandate to govern is derived also contains numerous aspects of communication, from the overall policy and advertising strategies to individual speeches of politicians.

The candidates and parties spend immense sums on the electoral process. In the 1993 federal campaign, official spending by all parties amounted to over 30 million dollars, while the unofficial total may have exceeded this. (Elections Canada, personal communication, January, 1994) The majority of this money was spent trying to hit on the right 'groove' with the voter, to somehow convey information to the electorate that would influence their decision-making process. The nature of that process is a matter of some debate, but the outcome is not: one of the parties is given a mandate to govern Canada for the next five years.

The 1993 campaign proved to be a landmark election in the history of Canada. The Progressive Conservative Party, one of the oldest and most established parties, was virtually annihilated as a political force, reduced from a governing majority to only two seats in the new Parliament. The Liberal Party, which formed the new government, resembled many other governing parties of times past, gaining broad representation from every region of the country.

The makeup of the new opposition, however, was anything but traditional. The task of acting as Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition fell to the Bloc Quebecois, a party which elected members from only one province and has as its central purpose the dismantling of the Canadian federation. While the left-of-centre NDP was reduced to a shadow of its former self, a new voice on the right of the political spectrum found itself in quite different circumstances. The conservative Reform Party, which had elected only one member to the previous parliament (through a by-election), now found itself with over fifty members almost exclusively from Western Canada and was cast in the role as the voice of the Canadian right.

Not since the 1930s had the country seen such a fracturing of the political landscape along linguistic, regional and economic lines. To further confuse the picture, the election occurred against a backdrop of growing voter cynicism and uncertainty. Opinion polls told us that people were becoming increasingly pessimistic about their future and that of their

children, and were not optimistic that any solution could be found in the existing political order. Given both the unique political and social circumstances surrounding the 1993 federal election, any study which adds to the existing knowledge of how people use information in a changing political climate will be invaluable.

Basis in Research

Many theories have been advanced to explain different aspects of political information use. While all theories have inherent assumptions, those in the field of political communication provide an example of how certain assumptions influence the outcome of research. The review of literature in this paper has a dual purpose - to explain past approaches to the study of political communication and, perhaps more importantly, outline how the assumptions of such research puts its findings into question.

As noted by Swanson and Nimmo (1990), a broad division occurs in political communication literature between the critical paradigm and the traditional voter persuasion paradigm. Critical approaches tend to question the deeper social aspects of the electoral process, while more traditional research accepts the functioning of the political system as is and looks at various aspects of it.

Within the literature of the traditional paradigm, the study of communication effects has been quite popular. Effects studies generally

assume that the media are the most important element of the communication process and proceed from that assumption to argue about the extent of the power of the media (Graber, 1990).

This study took the viewpoint of Burnell and Reeve (1984) that the election campaign is an exercise in the communication of persuasive messages. Various persuasion theories will be discussed to show how past research can be divided into two broad parts based the assumptions their respective theories make about the individual and the role of social and situational factors in information use. The examination of these theories and their assumptions, in turn, sets up the question of where people get their information that is the central concern of this study.

The Study

Ten people were originally selected as members of the study group in the riding of Windsor-Lake St.Clair on the basis of informal personal contact. This number fell to nine when one participant dropped out while the study was underway. Selection criteria were fairly broad: collaborators could not be members of a political party or be planning to campaign or volunteer for a candidate. An attempt was made to balance for gender, but time constraints restricted selection to seven women and two men.

The method of investigation employed was an adaptation of the Collaborative Inquiry Methodology (CIM) of Carney (1990). The bulk of

information was gathered from weekly telephone interviews that took place while the campaign was underway. Non-invasive questioning was the rule for the phone interviews, and the final wrap-up interview allowed other nondirected data-gathering techniques to be used. The information was analyzed, critiqued by a peer reviewer, and then presented to the collaborators for possible correction.

The collaborators were interviewed on a weekly basis over the phone about their perceptions of the campaign. They were also subjected to two face-to-face interviews, one at the start of the interview sessions and one approximately two weeks after election day.

In addition to the interviews, the collaborators were asked to complete weekly barometer forms which monitored how they felt about the national parties, leaders and local candidates. The information from these forms was compared to a log of media events and then the collaborators were asked in the follow up interviews to explain any large swings in opinion which had occurred.

Outline of the thesis

Chapter Two presents a summary of select background literature relevant to this investigation. It pays particular attention to the election as a persuasive process, looking at the assumptions inherent in different

theories and the influence these assumptions may have had on the outcome of past research.

Chapter Three examines the methodology employed in the investigation. The philosophical justification for using an adapted qualitative method is explained, as well as the details of its actual implementation. Particular emphasis is directed to the biases inherent in both quantitative and qualitative approaches and the subsequent justification for limited assumption research approaches.

Chapter Four presents the results of the investigation. It presents the references the collaborators made to either their sources of information and outlines any trends that were evident in this referencing.

Chapter Five discusses the findings of the investigation. It relates them to the theoretical and methodological biases outlined in chapters two and three. This will be followed by reflections on how the study contributed to the existing body of research and recommendations for further research.

Chapter Two

Review of Background Literature

Introduction

The question of where people get their political information is a complex one and can be approached from almost as many theoretical perspectives as there are individual voters. The selection and use of information by an electorate is part of many larger issues, such as how a population is motivated to process information, where this information comes from, and by what mechanism the information is elaborated. With so many potential paths of investigation, the question of "political communication" is a rather broad one, and historical explanations have been correspondingly diverse (Milburn, 1991).

This study looks at where a group of people got their information during an election campaign. Although a large number of investigations have been done on the issue of political communication in many different fields, there are essentially no studies which have used a limited assumption method to ask people where they get their political information. Furthermore, no studies have employed such a method to look at information use in the context of Canadian politics.

Most of the research that does exist follows definite assumptions about where political information comes from. A large quantity of data on media use, for example, has been collected through the National Election Studies (NES) in both Canada and the United States, but relies on closed-

ended questioning which presupposes the importance of the media (MacDermid, 1991).

The focus of this review of literature will therefore be twofold: It will 1) examine selected research in the field of political information use and, more importantly 2) examine how the assumptions which underlie much of this research may influence its findings.

This chapter will examine the shortcomings of previous approaches to explaining political information use, emphasising theories from the paradigm of persuasion research. By arguing that the use of political information is first and foremost a persuasive process, it will look at the assumptions inherent in various theories of persuasion and the relationship of these assumptions to the past study of political phenomena.

Critical and Effects Approaches to Information Use

The study of political information use has produced many explanatory frameworks which could be applied to the question of political communication. The two broad approaches of the critical and media effects paradigms could be considered as areas in which to ground a study of political information use. Both approaches, however, are based on

assumptions which may hinder the goal of the research and are ill-suited for use in this study.

The division between critical and traditional approaches will be outlined, as it demonstrates a fundamental division in how societal issues are researched. The logic behind the school of communication research termed "effects" studies will be examined, as such research represents a significant body of work which arguably could be applied to the question at hand.

The Critical Paradigm

From a meta-theoretical viewpoint, Swanson and Nimmo (1990) talk of two general approaches to information use that research has taken in the past. They group most of the traditional studies under the rubric of the "voter persuasion paradigm" and place newer, alternative research under the "critical" paradigm. Understanding this distinction is very important because the two approaches represent quite different philosophies of approaching research in general and the issue of political information use in particular.

According to Swanson and Nimmo, traditional approaches to political communication have tended to fit within the broad paradigm of positivism. Studies based in this viewpoint tend to focus on the factors within the decision-making process itself, the so-called "horse-race" aspects of politics.

The studies share the common theme of accepting the functioning of the political system as a baseline and then choosing to examine various aspects of it. In the study of Canadian politics, such research has looked at areas as diverse as campaign media strategies (Frizzell, 1990), voting behaviour (Archer, 1987), and the stability of opinion change in repeated polling (MacDermid, 1991).

Critical approaches, on the other hand, generally examine the deeper structural meaning and justification behind the communications themselves. Researchers subscribing to this paradigm attempt to step outside the system in order to reflect back upon its inherent biases and problems. In Canadian political research, a large volume of work has approached the issue from the sociological perspective to link social class to voting behaviour (Nakhaie, 1992).

This study concerns itself with a basic issue: that of where people get their political information in a Canadian federal election. It will not attempt to make any deep social criticism or commentary. In other words, the issue is one of *where* people get their information, not what systemic biases produce it.

Studies that follow the critical approach will be cited only when they offer an insight into the question of information use. This study will not concern itself with broad issues of social criticism, and thus for all essential purposes the research will fall within the "traditional" paradigm.

The Effects Tradition in Communication Studies

Much of the literature in the field of mass communications research has traditionally concerned the question of the nature of the effects of the media on a population (Graber, 1990). Such research emphasises the role of the media in information gathering, dissemination and receipt by the audience. The question is not one of the relation of media to other factors or even how people perceive the media itself. Effects studies, instead, concern themselves with arguing about how powerful the media are.

The seminal work of Klapper (1960) in The Effects of Mass Communication summarized the period of effects research from 1940 to 1960. He evaluated over one thousand studies and summarized them in a later analysis as a product of "...a research tradition which supplies, instead of definite answers, a plethora of relevant but inconclusive and at times contradictory findings" (Quoted in Graber, 1990: p.9). Klapper went on to conclude that there was no conclusive evidence of broad-based media effects, but that there was evidence that the media could have influence in limited circumstances.

As Graber (1990) points out, Klapper's work was treated as the definitive statement that media effects were severely limited. In reality, he had said only that studies up to that point did not give any evidence of strong effects, and that further research with different methods and foci might prove otherwise.

McQuail (1977) picked up where Klapper left off. He proposed an evolutionary, three-way categorization of the history of communication effects models. He labelled the first period, which lasted up until approximately the second World War, as the powerful media period. Beliefs of media power which emerged in this time frame, such as the classic magic bullet / hypodermic models, were a product of the rise of depression-era demagoguery, totalitarianism and their accompanying propaganda. These theories emphasised the passivity of the populace, the power of the media and their role in societal control.

This period gave way to one dominated by theories of the limited effects model. Researchers in this period - of whom Klapper was a contemporary - generally posited that the media were not all-powerful in their control of the public consciousness, but acted instead within specific, smaller parts of the persuasion equation. Centralized control was still possible, but was dependent on many more factors.

Finally, from about the late 1960s onward, McQuail proposed that communication theory evolved into a moderately powerful model. The effects of media and persuasion were held to be evident through research, but not readily measurable in short time frames.

The paradigm of media effects is a valid one from which to approach the issue of political communication if the researcher is primarily concerned with the role of the media (Graber, 1990). Effects researchers assume that

the media have some impact on a population and proceed to argue about the extent of that impact. Broader questions, such as how people approach the media, how messages are processed, what systemic factors come into play - even whether the media are important at all - are secondary to the overriding assumption that the media are important. For this reason, this study will not approach the question of political information use from an effects perspective, although it will - much like the critical paradigm - cite relevant studies which have been produced by its theorists.

Politics as a Persuasive Process

This research proposes to look at political information use as a form of persuasion. The election campaign is at its heart a process of using persuasive information to change, create or reinforce attitudes (Milburn, 1991). Voters bring their predispositions to an electoral setting and parties jockey - mainly through the media - for their attention (MacDermid, 1991). The acquisition of political information in such an environment can be treated as a cognitive process, with potential explanations looking at factors such as motivation to process information or relevance of a particular message to individuals within the electorate.

Burnell and Reeve (1984) identify politics as a persuasive process in much the same way. They define persuasion in a political setting as a situation where "A gets B to do/believe/accept/reject something he (sic) would not otherwise do/believe/accept/reject." (p.409) The central concept here is that attitude change does not have to occur for political persuasion to have taken place. Even if B *rejects* the information provided by A, A was acting in a persuasive manner even though B was not persuaded.

A large body of research exists which attempts to explain how persuasion occurs, and by extension can be seen as insights into the working of an election campaign. Persuasion research in this case is directly applicable to politics in that it deals with a variety of politically relevant factors including source credibility (Hovland, Janis and Kelley, 1953), cognitive decision making processes (Festinger, 1957), and message elaboration by an audience (Petty and Cacioppo, 1981; 1986).

The assumptions which underlie much of the research into political information use are readily evident through an examination of persuasion theories. This review of literature will look at various theories of persuasion research and how they relate to the workings of an election campaign. In doing so, it will show how the assumptions which underlie many of the persuasion theories may influence the outcome of research.

Competing Approaches to Information Use

The researcher has divided various theories of persuasion which explain how people use political information into two distinct approaches. This division is based on their conception of the individual and subsequent assumptions about the role of the media.

One school of thought situates individuals at the end of a linear model of information transmission. Messages are produced - in this case by political actors - and transmitted through the media to individuals who rationally process them. The individual does contribute to the process, but it is the various elements within the process of transmission that are the main focus of study. This leads to an emphasis on the power of the media in the political process.

An alternative to this linear model acknowledges that information is transmitted from political actors to a population, but differs on what is the most important part of the equation. A body of work places the emphasis on the individual - specifically on factors which may not be readily observable but may influence the dissemination and understanding of political information. Primary amongst these factors are social and environmental elements, such as the cognitive make-up of individuals and their contact with other people.

If the focus is shifted from individuals as abstract entities to their full context, very different elements come into play. Other people become just

as important providers of information as the media, albeit much harder to measure in their importance. A person's experience in society, in the form of self-perception or group experiences, then becomes very important when considering their subsequent information use.

Thus both approaches place very different emphasis on the role of the media as a provider of political information. In the following pages these competing visions of information transmission will be outlined using examples from persuasion theory to demonstrate the assumptions behind them.

Heirs of Shannon and Weaver

Many theories which emphasize the role and importance of the media within the political communication process can trace the origin of their assumptions to the linear model of information transmission proposed in the 1940s (Shannon and Weaver, 1949). Adapted from a mathematical theory of telephone signal transmission, "information theory" proposed a model of communication in which a source transmitted a message over a channel to a receiver (SMCR) - a simple, yet very powerful equation. From this understanding of the communication process, various factors within the transmission equation could then be studied. Shannon and Weaver, for example, talked about source factors, how "noise" on the channel of

transmission may interfere with the message, and how the whole process acted to reduce entropy, or uncertainty, through the use of feedback loops.

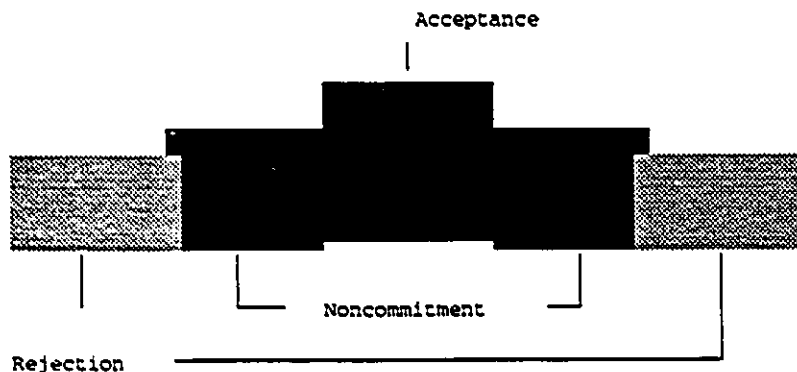
Political psychologist Michael Milburn (1991) has identified a major line of progressive explanations which focus on elements of the SMCR model. These studies have had a large impact on thinking associated with political persuasion, but also illustrate the biases inherent in the approach.

The Yale model of persuasion proffered by Hovland et al. (1953) proposed that variables surrounding actors in the origin of a persuasive message - the "sources" in the SMCR equation - could affect the outcome. In particular, it identified such factors as perceived source credibility, intent to persuade, and attractiveness as important variables in the acceptance or rejection of a persuasive message. Hovland and Weiss (1951) found that a message attributed to an "expert" was more persuasive than one attributed to a low credibility source.

Further research suggested that messages that advocated extreme attitude change were effective if advocated by a high-credibility source, but that such information had the opposite effect from a source of low credibility (Bechner and Insko, 1966). Low-credibility sources had persuasive effects only when they were perceived to be arguing against their own self-interest (Walster, Aronson and Abrahams, 1966) In politics, therefore, the public's perception of the credibility and intent of politicians would seem to have a great effect on their ability to persuade.

Hovland's further work with Sherif (1961) led to the "social judgement" model of attitude change. They looked at individuals but only to the extent of studying how people react to different types of messages. They proposed that people have different "latitudes" of acceptance and rejection when it comes to persuasive messages, and that the ability of an individual to be persuaded depends on how different the behavioral change being advocated is from his or her own beliefs. A message that differs greatly from a person's cognitive "anchor point" will have little persuasive impact, while one that is only moderately different will have the greatest chance of acceptance. They conceptualized distance from one's cognitive anchor point as a spectrum of acceptance, rejection and noncommitment (Figure 2:1). Any message which advocates an attitude just outside the realm of acceptance would fall within the latitude of noncommitment, and outside that area the message would be totally rejected.

Figure 2-1: Latitudes of Acceptance, Rejection and Noncommitment



(Adapted from Milburn, 1991, p.112)

Further work posited that the degree of "involvement" in an issue by individuals was predictive of their perception and reaction to a persuasive political message. Krosnick's work on US National Election Survey data found a strong correlation between high values placed on issues and the eventual choice of candidate (Krosnick, 1988). The concept of cognitive anchoring has also been used by political researchers to explain how people tend to think their opinions on policy issues are more widely shared than they really are (Granberg, Jefferson, Brent and King, 1981).

An attempt was made to integrate message and individual factors in the communication effects model of Fishbein and Ajzen (1975). They looked at persuasive messages and said that the probability that a message would be accepted is based on its acceptance by individuals. Unless the message is accepted, it cannot cause any change in attitude or behaviour. They propose an equation which can be used to determine the probability of acceptance of a message:

$$p(a) = (1 - D)^{1/f}$$

In the equation, $p(a)$ represents the probability of acceptance, D is the discrepancy of the message from the individual's attitudes, while the exponent f refers to facilitating factors such as credibility of sources and arguments. If the discrepancy of the message (D) is low - (0.2) for example - but the value of the facilitating factors is also low at (0.2), the probability of

acceptance is one third, or 33%. They go on to build a series of equations on this premise, positing that a mathematical understanding of attitude change is possible. Thus by measuring voters' attitudes on various issues and crafting messages accordingly, the probability that political messages would be accepted could be determined, at least theoretically.

The preceding persuasion theories outlined by Milburn (1991) in the field of social psychology are but one example of how research has historically evolved from explanations of relative simplicity (SMCR; Yale Model) to models of increasing complexity (the Communication Effects Model). Yet the theories share the same underlying premise - a transmission model which, while complex, still retains the linear nature of the SMCR model of Shannon and Weaver with an incidental focus on individuals and their social context. The Yale model isolates factors surrounding the source and looks at the impact on the individual receiver. The social judgement model focuses on the persuasive communication and its acceptance by the receiver. The mathematical formulae of Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) treat the receiver as a mere quantifiable factor in an equation that includes source and message factors. An individual is just that - a separate entity whose behaviour can be observed, measured, and predicted like a part in a machine.

The logic that follows from this assumption puts enormous importance on the media supplying the persuasive message. If individuals

are not influenced by personal and environmental factors and merely receive and processes persuasive messages on an individual level, the medium to which they are most exposed becomes the most important source of persuasion.

Studies conducted on Canadian political behaviour tend to reflect this assumption. The longest running study of Canadian electoral data - the National Election Study - has provided social science researchers with detailed information on every federal election since 1965, with the exception of the 1972 election (MacDermid, 1991). The most recent data based on this type of study was research conducted during the 1988 election which interviewed 70 - 80 new respondents each day of the campaign (Johnston, Blais, Brady and Crete, 1992) While new findings were somewhat surprising - for example, the percentage of people who did not identify with a major party was 50% higher than previous studies - the basis of the investigation followed traditional assumptions about information use. Questions were constructed on the basis of past findings in the areas of political communication, confining the scope of inquiry to television, print media, and radio usage.

In the persuasion theories and the studies based on their assumptions, we see an underlying approach that views communication as a linear process and emphasises the importance of the media. There is a substantial body of work which questions this importance and offers

different interpretations of how people perceive and process political messages.

Problems With Traditional Research

If it is assumed that information transmission is linear and that factors surrounding the individual are of limited importance, then the media that transmit information become important objects of study. Researchers have devoted an enormous amount of attention to the role of the media, particularly television, as the primary source of political information use based on this very assumption.

The media are very important factors in the process of political persuasion, as the modern election campaign is far removed from the life of the average voter. Attempts by the national parties to communicate their message occur almost exclusively through the media, with token attempts made through personal canvassing and direct-mail (Yum and Kendall, 1988). Candidates in individual ridings are almost invisible, as the majority of media attention falls to national figures (Fletcher, 1987).

Researchers tell us that people do choose television for their information. In one Canadian study, 47% of respondents said they watched television for news, while 31% chose newspapers and 15% radio (Adams and Levitin, 1988). Studies in the U.S. have painted a similar picture. One specific examination of political information use found that 86% of

respondents cited television as their primary source, although 82% said newspapers were their most important sources (Yum and Kendall, 1988)

Political parties have followed this emphasis on television, spending millions on advertisements and attempting to put the right "spin" on their candidates for the television news and debates (Frizzell, 1990).

Television is incredibly popular; but does the amount of viewing time translate into an efficient model of information transmission? Research has also uncovered cracks in the supposed dominance of television as an information provider. The Yum and Kendall (1988) study of U.S. political information sources offered respondents the option of interpersonal contact along with the choices of more traditional media. Fully 18% of respondents cited sources such as family and friends, and those who did so were more likely to rely exclusively on such sources.

People who choose television may not be getting information in the straightforward manner theorists assume. In one study of political communication in Scandinavia, television was found to be the primary source of political information, but the amount of use varied widely between election campaigns (Siune, 1991). Moreover, the study found that the ranking of television as "a source of information and help in decision making for voters" was not constant across the population. People with high levels of political interest ranked television lowest as a source of information, while those with low levels of interest ranked it highest.

Research also suggests that the electorate does not use television in the manner assumed by advertisers and effects theorists. According to Graber (1989), complex policy options are rarely recalled by voters and they make frequent mistakes in attributing policies to the wrong party or political figure. She also found that three out of four reasons people gave for supporting a particular candidate concerned personality traits and not policy positions. Other studies have shown that voters do not recall televised messages accurately, but often draw conclusions based on their feelings towards the past stands and impressions of the political parties which may be totally at odds with the current media "image" (Conover and Feldman, 1986).

Information use is not constant across society. Clarke, Jensen, Leduc and Pammett (1979) found in their Canadian study that respondents who were from a higher social class tended to get their political information from the print media, while television use did not correlate with any variable except age. Older respondents were more likely to use television than younger ones. A similar study, in the United States, showed that voters who sought out proper information on any political issue and made a choice based on that information - essentially the classic model of information distribution - amounted to only 12% of the electorate (Neuman, 1976). In Canada, television audience members who were "attentive" to election

coverage made up less than 50% of the public, and those who did watch television did so to reinforce their beliefs (MacDermid, 1991).

The National Election Surveys (NES) in both Canada and the United States have traditionally been the chief source of data for research on media use and politics (Gidengil, 1992). Yet Wright (1993) found in his study that there were serious problems with the NES data gathered in the U.S. since 1978. He found that respondents seriously overstate their support for winning candidates, and goes on to note that this error is large enough to put correlations with other variables - including media use - into serious question.

Even if we take the NES election studies at face value, their data alone are enough to seriously dispute the assumption that television and other media are important providers of information. The data from the 1988 Canadian election indicates that fully 27% of respondents watched television news two or fewer times per week during the campaign (MacDermid, 1991). This corresponds with Statistics Canada (1989) data, which found that of the total amount of time Canadians spent in front of the television, only 17.1% was devoted to Canadian news. Newspaper use was similarly sparse during the 1988 campaign. The NES data shows that over 60% of respondents read "some, very little or no" news about the campaign during the election.

The media are important conveyors of information, but how much do we really know about *how* they are used? Research based on the assumptions of media use has not really produced a comprehensive understanding of the issue. Despite numerous studies and the huge amounts of money spent on political market research, we know little about how messages in the media interact with other information sources in the context of an election (Choi and Becker, 1987). As Fletcher (1987) notes, academic interest in the media and Canadian politics has traditionally been confined to a number of articles on the coverage of the campaign, but not on the actual relationship between the media and the voter.

An Alternative to the Linear Model

A considerably smaller, but no less valid body of work takes a different approach to the use and dissemination of information. While the mainstream of thought on political communication accepts the influence of the media as a given, other explanations have been offered which emphasise social and psychological factors.

The Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) of Petty and Cacioppo (1981; 1986) is in many ways a logical conclusion of the work of Sherif and Hovland (1961) and persuasion theorists. The ELM shares many of the assumptions of the linear model, but adds important environmental cues

which shift the focus of attention from strictly individual factors to those of a social or environmental nature.

Petty and Cacioppo propose that individuals process persuasive messages through either a peripheral or central route. The route through which a message is processed is predictive of the strength and nature of the attitude change which results. If, for example, receivers are attentive, are in an environment which allows them to consider the message, and that message is personally relevant message to them, they will be motivated to process the message through the central route. In doing so, the person will consider the merits of the message, subject them to internal debate, and arrive at an informed conclusion. Any attitude change that results from such processing should be fairly solid.

If the multiple conditions for such processing are not present the receiver will use the "peripheral route", relying on superficial factors such as source attractiveness to justify their decision. The attitude change that results, if any, will be very tenuous, and may require further persuasive processing or reshaping of the message to effect long-term change.

This shift of attention from media and message factors to those of individuals and their environment had its roots in the psychological approaches of the 1950s. The theory of cognitive dissonance proposed by Festinger (1957) offered a somewhat different take on the assumptions underlying the Yale model. He proposed that individuals processed

information in a decidedly irrational manner. He said that people existed in varying states of internal conflict, and that the information they were exposed to in the course of everyday life had the potential to show how their reality was in conflict with their self-perception. Once they were made aware of this discrepancy, people would then suffer from psychological stress, or dissonance. They would then be motivated to bring these internal conflicts into agreement, either by changing their behaviour or how they perceived a situation. This motivation would cause people to seek out information to bring their attitudes and actions in line while avoiding information which increased such conflict.

The logic that follows from these assumptions points to different conclusions than the work of persuasion theorists. Unlike cognitive anchoring, the theories based on cognitive dissonance would advocate a message that was designed to produce the greatest amount of dissonance in order to effect the greatest attitude change, a strategy that on the surface is totally illogical (Zimbardo, 1960).

Similar theories that preceded cognitive dissonance, such as congruency theory (Osgood and Tannenbaum, 1955) and balance theory (Newcomb, 1953; Heider, 1958) were based on the same assumption - that of an attitude inconsistency within the individual leading to a change in behaviour. From a political persuasion standpoint, messages which induced such inconsistencies within the voter would have the greatest result in

attitude change. For example, voters who pride themselves on social consciousness would be swayed by appeals about the plight of the poor, and perhaps be more inclined to vote for a party advocating interventionist policies.

The view that individuals may approach information processing with motives that are less than logical undermines the emphasis that linear concepts of information flow place on the media. Even if people are provided with political information that is logical in argument and supported by clear facts, they may evaluate it by a totally illogical process and come to a conclusion that is not the one intended or expected by the source of the information.

Studies that attempted to explain information processing from the standpoint of schema theory evolved in part from the work of Festinger and other consistency theorists. DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach (1989; p.256) define a schema as "...personal organizations of subjective meanings for objects, situations or events perceived through the senses." Schema theory posits that individuals have mental constructs regarding what they perceive, and use these constructs to evaluate the world around them - including the information they are exposed to.

Such constructs are by nature not readily observable, but many researchers have applied the concept to the processing of information. General cognitive sophistication has been linked to how individuals think

about political issues (Rosenberg, 1987). Other researchers have proposed that not only do people use schemas to interpret the media, but that the media influences people's schemas, simplifying their interpretation of complex events (Milburn and Fay-Dumaine, 1988).

The fact that people may look at the media through the frame of their own experience is the basis of Fiske's ideas of "oppositional readings" of media messages (Fiske, 1987; 1989). Individuals, according to Fiske, have their own distinct experiences that they bring to an interaction with the mass media. The meaning of any particular message is not determined solely by the designers of that message but is instead co-created by the interaction of the audience with the message itself. Individuals may watch a television program, for example, and interpret it in a way that the producers could not have imagined.

The possibility of oppositional meanings puts into question the power of the media to influence people in a political context. Pieces of political information such as commercials or general campaign appeals may be designed with a specific intent, but the result of the communication may in fact be totally opposite to what the designers of the information may have intended.

An example of an oppositional reading from the 1993 Canadian federal election would perhaps be the negative television advertisements attacking Jean Chretien that were run by the Progressive Conservative

Party. The ads used unflattering still photos of Chretien to appeal to people's concerns about his suitability to be Prime Minister. The result was not the rise in support for the Conservatives which the ads designers had hoped to achieve, but rather a backlash of disgust that effectively torpedoed the party's entire campaign.

Approaches which posit that the social and cognitive realities of people are the primary factors in information use present problems for the very study of persuasion. If the important factors of what influences people are not in the realm of observable behaviour or are not predictable through some form of objective logic, then our understanding of how people use and process information may be severely deficient.

The People's Choice Studies

At the roughly the same time as the Shannon-Weaver model was gaining prominence, research was pointing in a direction other than that of the traditional linear flow of information suggested by the SMCR paradigm. The findings of Lazarsfeld, Berelson and Gaudet (1944) in the landmark Erie County study and the work of Berelson, Lazarsfeld and McPhee (1954) in the companion Elmira study pointed to a perviously unresearched variable - that of interpersonal contact - as being very important in the context of US Presidential elections. The research behind these "people's choice" studies followed very large panels of voters through an election

campaign and monitored their decision-making process. The results both supported certain traditional assumptions and brought other, unexpected aspects of the campaign to the fore.

Some panel members had their strong predispositions reinforced by campaign information, others saw their leanings in one direction or another swayed by media coverage (Lazarsfeld et al., 1944). Factors such as class and education were found to be relevant, but large-scale conversion through exposure to a persuasive message was not found to be at all a factor (Berelson et al., 1954).

An unintended - but very interesting result from the Erie County study that was later borne out in the Elmira study - was the role of interpersonal relationships in the dissemination of political information. The messages were getting to the voters through the expected channels, but the further spread and evaluation of those messages occurred through discussion between members of the population. Berelson, for example, found that more people engaged in an informal exchange of ideas with others on a typical day of the campaign than were exposed to political information in the media.

The Elmira and Erie County studies offer a competing explanation to the traditional research that evolved from the SMCR assumptions. Interpersonal contact - either with "opinion leaders" or merely between

friends or family members - functioned both as a source of new information and as a means of understanding existing beliefs and dispositions.

The discovery of such nontraditional means of information transmission led to the later two-step and multi-step flow models, wherein information originates from a source and is then disseminated through various interpersonal relationships, feedback loops and the like (Katz, 1957, 1960).

This presents a serious competing explanation to traditional assumptions about information flow. As Katz notes:

Until very recently, the image of society in the minds of most students of communication was of atomized individuals, connected with the mass media, but not with one another. Society - the "audience" - was conceived of as aggregates...but little thought was given to the relationships...(T)he point is not that (the researcher) was unaware that members of the audience have families and friends, but that he did not believe that they might affect the outcome of a campaign..." (Katz, 1960 p.436)

In essence, the very idea of a linear transmission model of transmission with individual receivers at the end was cast into doubt. A new dynamic confused the simple nature of previous assumptions. The resultant two-step flow model posited that information goes from the media to information consumers and then through the interpersonal contacts of those consumers to other people (Katz, 1957).

The Schema Approach of Graber

One of the few, and perhaps more important, contemporary studies to propose a nontraditional explanation of political information use was the research of Graber (1984) surrounding the 1976 U.S. Presidential election. She conducted in-depth interviews with a small panel of participants in the period from January 1976 to January 1977. The interviews averaged over two hours per subject per interview to determine how panel members were choosing and processing political information. Her study was quite extensive, and would be enough on which to base numerous investigations. Several areas, however, are of specific interest in the context of this research.

Most of the questions she used were open-ended because "...closed-ended questions force respondents to fit their ideas into thinking patterns suggested by the investigator rather than using their own approaches.." (Graber, 1984; p.15). While the information produced in response to her inquiries was largely directed by the participants, she chose to explain their experiences in terms of personal schemas. She proposed that her subject group processed the large amount of information that was in the media regarding politics by relating it to different individual schemas.

According to Graber, people have multiple schemas through which they view political information. If this information does not "fit" within any of these schemas it is not retained by the person exposed to it. She

cautioned, however, that survey instruments were not geared towards measurement of schema identification, noting that it was wrong to think that membership in a certain measurable group could be equated with a schema on an individual level. According to her example, "...many women oppose the feminist movement in whole or in part, and many Jews do not identify with the State of Israel. Yet, research conventions, and the difficulty, at times, of obtaining large enough samples to demonstrate intergroup differences, have led to glossing over such differences." (p.210)

Graber also took issue with the observations of the People's Choice studies and the two-step and multi-step process models which grew out of the work of Katz (1957; 1960). She found that the members of her group said they received information directly from the media, and said they did not learn anything new from conversations they had about politics. It was unclear from the scope of her investigation, however, if the participants' exchange of information with others may have led to different evaluations of the information they brought to the interaction.

Graber's panellists did say that they learned little during the campaign, and this is perhaps best illustrated in her reports of how they perceived the Presidential debates. Her panellists tended to downplay the three debates that occurred during the 1976 U.S. election, saying that they found them boring, hard to follow, and an overall waste of time. Instead, they tended to speak about information they had known before the

campaign began, indicating that, at least for a small study in the U.S., information gathered during the campaign was secondary to established perceptions of the parties and candidates.

Summary of Assumptions

Two very different perspectives on information use in a political campaign have emerged from a study of the literature. The first contains a string of theories and resultant studies that have as their central focus the transmission elements of the communication process itself, choosing to focus on variables contained in the source, message, and channel. The receiver, while important, is conceived of as an individual entity at the end of the transmission equation and is treated at best on an equal footing with other elements in that equation. The structure of media flow envisioned by this approach emphasises the role of the media - in particular television - in the spread and understanding of political messages.

On the other hand, studies have raised serious questions about the importance of the media in voter decision-making and the concept of linear information flow to individual, atomized voters. The Elmira and Erie County studies have especially shown the value of interpersonal relationships in the evaluation of political information.

Framing the Issue for Investigation

Traditional assumptions about political information use have dominated modern election research, specifically the belief that the media are the most important factors in the dissemination of information. There is a demonstrable need for research into the relationship of interpersonal factors to more traditional media sources of information. Very few studies look at this relationship and none have been conducted in the context of a Canadian federal election. What remains is to look at the issue using a methodology that will not assume any one factor to be important, thus limiting or negating any bias towards one model of transmission over another.

Chapter Three

Methodology

"The fatal tendency of mankind to leave off thinking about a thing which is no longer doubtful is the cause of half their errors..."

- J.S. Mill

Introduction

This chapter explains the methodology used in the study of information use during the 1993 Canadian federal election. It begins by describing the philosophical justification for using an adapted qualitative instead of a more traditional quantitative method of investigation. In doing so it will look specifically at the assumptions underlying both methodological approaches and their potential impact on the outcome of research. The original concepts of the Collaborative Inquiry Methodology (CIM) as advanced by Carney (1990) are explained to familiarize the reader with its interview path and unique information gathering instruments. Finally, the details of the adapted method are explained with specific reference to data gathering and analytical procedures used in this investigation.

Philosophical Justification

In his seminal look at the evolution of scientific investigation, Thomas Kuhn (1962) proposed that ways of looking at the world come into being not

through breakthroughs and subsequent acceptance by practitioners in a given field, but rather through gradual and often bitterly opposed change. Through a process he dubbed "paradigm shift", ideas that were once accepted as sacrosanct are re-examined when their explanatory power can no longer withstand questions posed by newer ideas. Traditional norms come under closer scrutiny as accepted ideas are reconfigured or disproved. The end result, according to Kuhn, is an entirely new paradigm which looks at its subject matter through decidedly different explanatory and investigative frameworks than those of its discredited predecessor.

While Kuhn states that this process may take years - sometimes centuries - the current state of social science can be argued to be in an indeterminate stage of such a paradigm shift. So-called "critical" and "new paradigm" approaches offer competing explanations of social phenomena to those offered by traditional positivism. On a methodological front, variants of qualitative investigative techniques pose alternate explanations as to how society works and can be best explained and examined.

It is unclear what types of academic models will emerge to dominate the future of social science. The fact that traditional investigatory and explanatory assumptions have been called into question leaves the entire area - including the study of communications-related phenomena - in a general state of flux.

As we have seen in the previous chapter, the study of political information use has not been immune from competing explanations. Much of this difference of opinion can be traced to assumptions which have their roots in the methodological approach taken to investigating the topic. Such assumptions, in large part, predetermine what will emerge as important in the results.

Quantitative and Qualitative Methods

Quantitative and qualitative approaches to investigation are similar in that they both use systematic investigatory methods to study social phenomena and produce some measure of new understanding. The two approaches differ considerably in their philosophical background and subsequent view of society and the individual (Miles and Huberman, 1984).

Quantitative approaches to social measurement can be traced to the early nineteenth century positivism of Auguste Comte. Comte held that we can never really know or measure how people feel, but that we can evaluate those individual factors which are observable (Frost, 1962). Observable things, such as behaviour, could then be measured, explained, and those explanations held to be constant across a population.

The positivist research that evolved from this assumption applied similar principles of measurement to society that their contemporaries in the physical sciences had applied to the material world. They held that social

phenomena could be explained in terms of universal principles that could be quantified and used in predictive equations. Such an approach is based on the belief that individuals are the a sum of attributes which can be measured separate from their social context.

This culminates in a model of human behaviour that posits that people are the same across society, differing only in their respective make-up.

Where (I) represents the individual, (A) represents attributes and (X) individual values, so that:

$$I = A_1X_1 + A_2X_2 + \dots A_nX_n$$

(Adapted from Anderson, 1987:53)

Individuals can be differentiated, but are composed of measurable attributes which may be quantified across a given population. In other words, the (A₁) of people within a population may differ greatly between individuals, but it can be measured and grouped into distinct categories for a large number of people.

Guba and Lincoln (1982) call this approach to social investigation *rationalistic*. Not only are the component attributes of the individual measurable, but they are also believed to be the product of rational processes. Taken to its conclusion, the logic of this equation works both ways. If people's world views are the product of rational processes, then their component

attributes/attitudes can be influenced by correspondingly logical persuasive information.

Qualitative approaches are much newer to the field of social research and account for only a small portion of actual communications research. Anderson (1984) found that of 1100 published pieces of research done in the five years prior to his study, only 16 could be considered qualitative in their approach. While this number has no doubt increased in the last ten years, it does indicate how extensive the use of positivist methods has been within the field of social research.

Where quantitative methods can be traced to the positivism of Comte, qualitative approaches have their base in the writings of German sociologists. The basis of this sociological approach is perhaps best evident in the work of Weber (1949). He stated that the actual meaning of a behaviour should be the focus of social study, not the behaviour itself. He emphasised that a researcher can only explain the meaning of the behaviour of individuals if they reach a stage of *verstehen*, or sympathetic understanding of their social context.

This question of context is essential to the understanding of the qualitative approach. The qualitative study of social phenomena is necessarily subjective in that the attributes of individuals are not seen as objective constructs which exist independent of our knowledge of them, but are imbedded within a context specific to the individual. Human behaviour is

not always rational and occurs within a complex social environment and can only be understood in relation to this context (Van Maanen, 1988).

If the reality of individuals is socially constructed, as qualitative researchers hold, then that reality cannot be discussed without reference to the environment from which it came. Reality cannot be measured and quantified across populations, but is rather a subjective construct specific to individuals within their social context.

Implications for Research

The differences between methodological approaches have definite implications for the study of information use. "Assumptions," according to Anderson (1987, p.43), "affect the very structure of research and...different assumptions...lead to different procedures and explanations." As shown in the preceding chapter, the main assumption underlying past quantitative studies of information use is that the media - in particularly television - are the primary providers of political information. This is a logical outcome of a viewpoint which places the individual at the end of a linear model of information transmission. If the main information flow occurs from politicians through traditional media directly to the individual, then the media themselves and their use by the individual become very important.

Traditional quantitative research is based on the assumption of the importance of variables and their selective manipulation (Anderson, 1987).

The classic survey approach to data gathering asks people definite, closed-ended questions or offers them limited response choices - both of which are determined by the researcher before application of the survey instrument.

Past studies of information use have generally followed this logic. The surveys of media use which formed a part of the National Election Studies (NES) in both the US and Canada asked subjects whether they got their political information from print media, radio or television (MacDermid, 1991). Researchers correlated the information sources to other factors, such as education level or party preference. An assumption is made - in this case that television and other media are important sources of information - and questions are asked of the respondents accordingly.

Assumptions about the importance of the media as information providers are a matter of some debate, as was shown in the preceding chapter. Interpersonal contact may provide as important a source of primary information as the media, and may play an undetermined role in secondary processing as well. It was therefore the intent of this study to approach the issue with as few assumptions as possible, and to construct methods of data collection so as to best allow the respondents to speak freely about their experiences during the election campaign and about where they received their information.

The research methods employed here attempt to minimize the impact of any assumptions the researcher might have about what is and what is not an important information source during an election campaign.

CIM and the Tradition of Qualitative Research

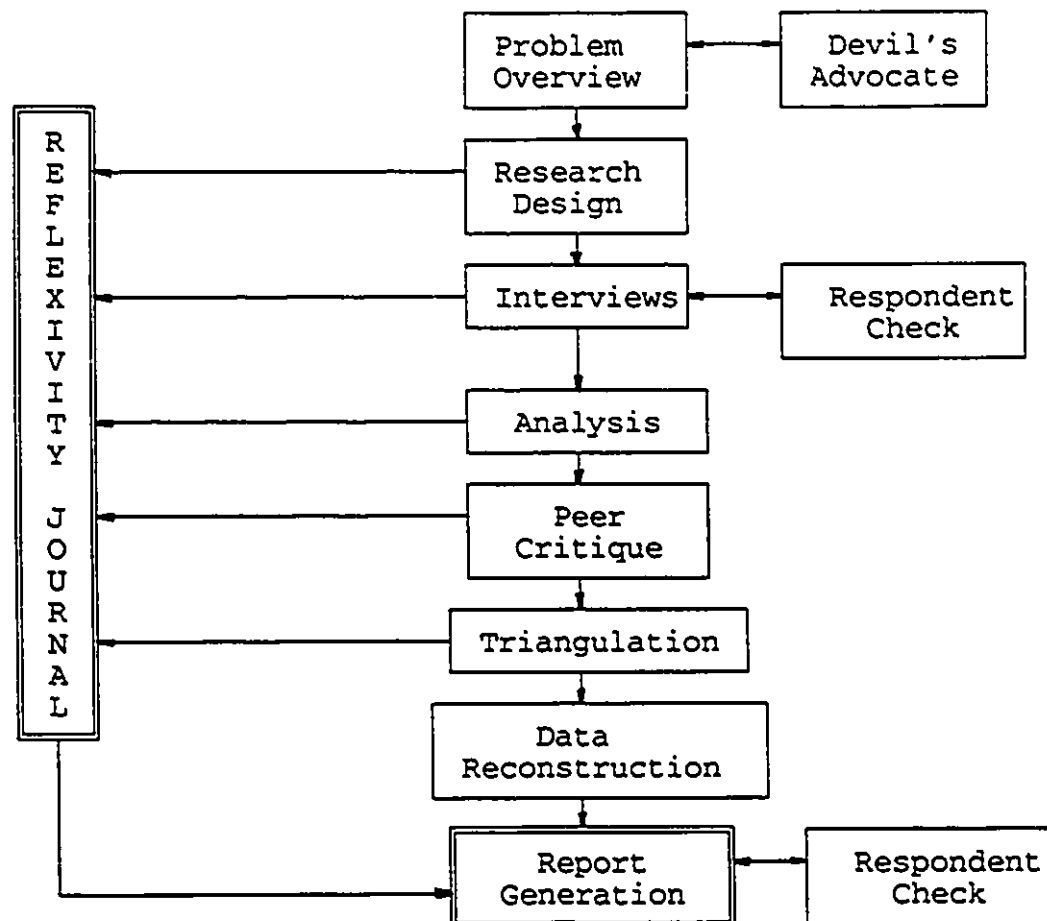
There is no accepted way to conduct qualitative research in the same way that there are standard approaches to quantitative study (Miles and Huberman, 1984). While positivist approaches have the established conventions of surveys, experimental designs and statistical abstraction upon which to base research, qualitative approaches are fragmented between research methods as disparate as ethnography and socio-linguistics (Carney, 1990).

This investigation adapted the Collaborative Inquiry Methodology (CIM) of Carney (1990) to suit a longitudinal research study (Figure 3-1). Aside from its unique data gathering tools, the CIM was chosen because it holds as its central premise that the investigation of anyone's experience must be of a non-leading, non-intrusive nature. Multiple safeguards exist within the method to prevent the researcher from constructing data to fit his or her own assumptions about what is important. As the name implies, collaborative inquiry treats the subject of the investigation not as an

amorphous piece in a larger puzzle but as a co-investigator, a collaborator who is to be accorded an equal role in the investigation.

The methodology of Collaborative Inquiry has many complex parts, several of which have been adapted for the purposes of this study. The method has been outlined in Figure 3-1 and will be explained in a general manner, with reference to the following relevant stages.

Figure 3-1: The Simplified Collaborative Inquiry Methodology



Problem Overview

Before setting out on a course of study, the researcher must have a full understanding of the problem and place it within its appropriate literature. In a traditional quantitative study, such background research would lead to the creation of hypotheses which could then be tested empirically.

Collaborative Inquiry, following the tenets of qualitative research, does not begin with a hypothesis and then proceed to test it. Rather, it begins with a broad area of study and lets the collaborators explain their experiences. An explanation is then proposed at the end of the inquiry that best fits the results. The method can explain social phenomena while limiting possible charges of researcher bias in favour of one outcome over another. At the same time, it requires a thorough background knowledge of the issue from which candidate explanations can be drawn.

Having determined what course of study is desirable, researchers then run their ideas past a **devil's advocate**. Generally a peer or someone with knowledge of the topic area, the devil's advocate can offer a different perspective of the definition of the problem and the way to approach it, suggesting alternatives which may be more appropriate.

Implementation

Collaborative Inquiry builds on the traditions of heuristic dialectic evident in the work of Hegel and subsequent German social theorists.

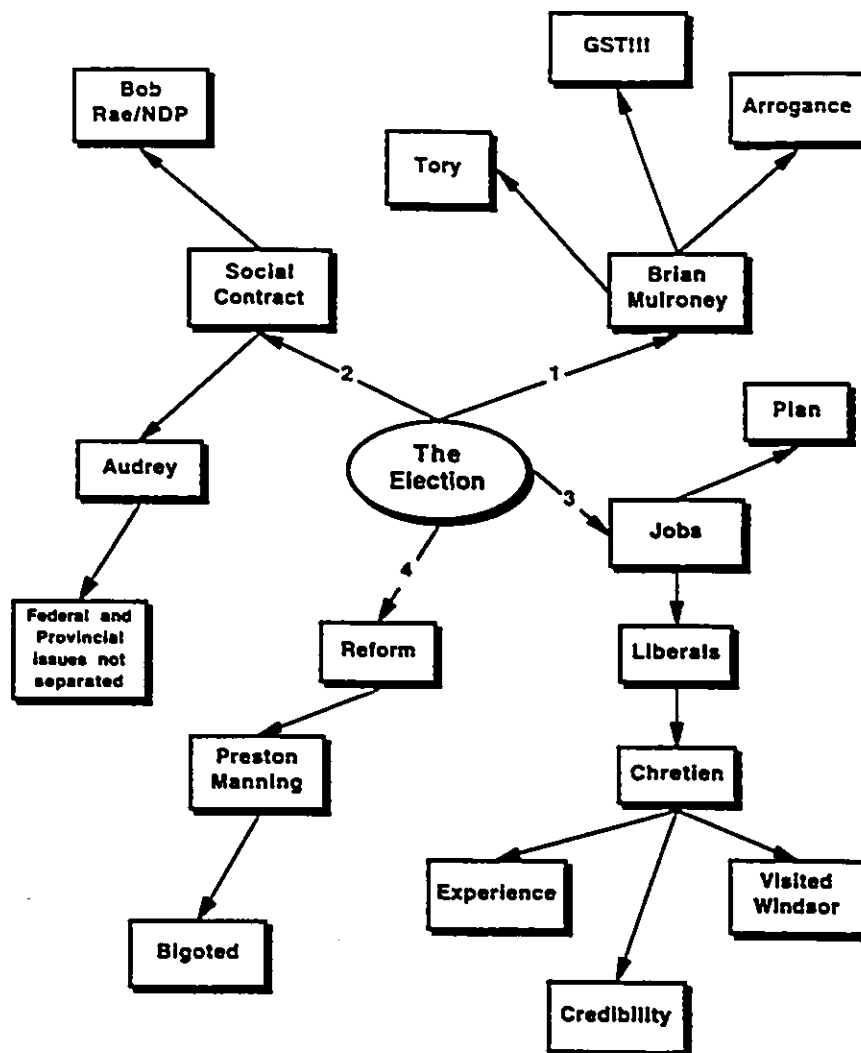
Research is not an imposition of an exploratory framework to extract information from a subject, but is instead conceived of as a two-way process whereby the researcher and subject work towards a mutual discovery (Carney, 1990). To this end, Carney adapted the idea of a standardized interview path from Denzin (1989). The idea is to provide - within a framework that can be applied to multiple circumstances - ample opportunity for both the researcher to ask nondirected questions and for collaborators to relate whatever version of their experience they wish.

The interview stage of the CIM uses both nondirected questioning and schematic drawings provided by the subject as data gathering tools. The questioning is straightforward, usually taking the form of "Could you talk about your feeling towards subject X?". The method cautions the researcher to avoid at all costs giving any indication to the subject that specific parts of the responses may or may not be interesting. Instead, noncommittal words and body language are recommended if the subject seems to need encouragement.

The beginning of the interview session is devoted to confidence building. The collaborator is assured of confidentiality and his/her rights under the study are explained. The nature of the data gathering tools and the nonleading approach of questioning is outlined, then the interview proceeds through distinct stages using unique research instruments.

The CIM emphasises two nonverbal data gathering tools - the **cluster** and **forcefield** - as a free-form way of capturing how collaborators may feel towards the research topic. In a clustering exercise, a subject is given a central topic and instructed to free-associate around it, branching off related topics in whatever order they care to assign. An example drawn from a collaborator's original sketch is provided in Figure 3-2. The collaborator in

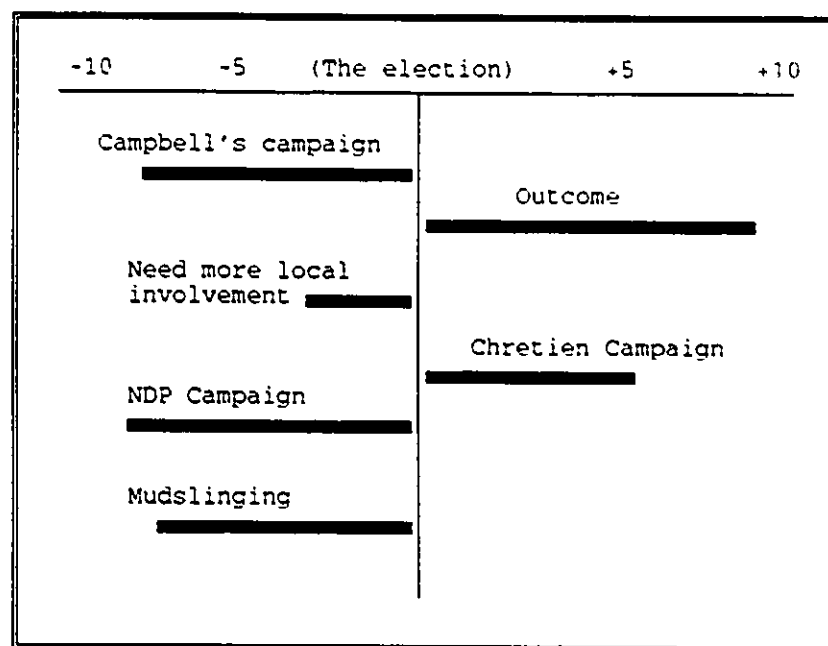
Figure 3-2 An Example of a Cluster



that case was given the central topic of the election and went on to provide the items which came to mind when she thought about the topic. She was then asked to place numbers on the various branches to give the researcher an indication of the priority they held for her.

The **forcefield** exercise allows collaborators to give whatever feelings they have towards the research topic in a positive or negative framework. The exercise is similar in intent to the quantitative Likert scale in that it allows collaborators to indicate how they feel about a given topic. Where it differs is that it does not provide any categories by which the topic may be

Figure 3-3: A Sample Forcefield



judged, but instead asks collaborators to rate whatever they feel are the negative aspects of the research topic. A standardized form is presented to collaborators that has the central topic at the top, a dividing line and

gradients of positive or negative on either side. Collaborators are then asked to fill in whatever they perceive as positive or negative about the given topic. A portion of a forcefield drawn by a collaborator in this study is provided in Figure 3-3.

The forcefield and cluster diagrams also function as a check against the possibility that the collaborator may be saying one thing but feeling another, a real danger of qualitative work outlined by Douglas (1985). In the interviews, the collaborators may be practising conscious or unconscious deception, telling the researcher not what they really feel but what they think the researcher wants to hear. As the cluster and forcefield offer different approaches to the same topic, they function as a check that may bring any inconsistencies in the collaborators' opinions to light.

Carney terms the end of the interview the "going-out-the-door" (G.O.D.) phase. The collaborator also usually relaxes at this stage because the interview has come to a close, allowing so-called "sleeper effects" to emerge which might not have come out during the interview itself. Direct questioning is also possible because there is no chance that it will contaminate the investigation.

Analysis

The researcher reviews the material gathered and attempts to discern what the collaborators are saying. This is drawn from the work of Schon

(1983), who says that the data and subsequent knowledge of the context it came from will show the researcher how to interpret it. He states that there are several candidate frameworks which can be used to explain any one situation, and it is the job of the researcher to consider them and choose the one which best explains the data.

Once the researcher has decided what it is the collaborators are saying, the interpretation is run through a **peer critique**. Excerpts of data and interpretation are presented to a peer who offers a different viewpoint on your interpretations of the collaborators' story.

The use of a check such as the peer critique begins the analysis through the process of **triangulation**. Different candidate explanations of the data are proposed by the researcher and compared to those offered by the peer reviewer and eventually those of the collaborators themselves. Yin (1984) calls this process **pattern matching**, an attempt to narrow the field of candidate explanations to present the most encompassing explanation of the research topic. From triangulation, one proceeds to **reconstruction** of the data around the framework of the explanation.

Product

When an explanation has been proposed which best fits the perspectives of the researcher, peer reviewer and collaborators, the research moves to the stage of **report generation** which sees the production of

written results. These results are presented to the collaborators for a final **respondent check** which allows them to have final say on the interpretation of their experience.

Documentation / Reliability Checks

At the end of the research process, Collaborative Inquiry cannot rely on "hard data" in the form of numbers and the accompanying lustre of impartiality that the quantification of a large anonymous sample allows. Instead, it gathers its information from a small number of information-rich interviews which require close researcher-collaborator cooperation. As such, results produced by the method could be open to charges of researcher subjectivity.

To guard against this possibility, almost every step of the investigation requires documented checks which produce an audit trail to guard against the incursion of subjective biases. The stages of **Problem Overview, Interview, Analysis/ Triangulation, Data Reconstruction and Report Generation** all require the production of documentation which will allow the reconstruction of the investigation at a later date should any charges of subjective bias be laid. In addition, the researcher keeps a **Reflexivity Journal** throughout the project, much like those kept by anthropologists, which records personal feelings toward the collaborators and feeling about the research in general.

Outside Input / Feedback

To further reduce the possibility of bias, the CIM is configured to allow for input from participants other than the primary researcher. The original stage of Problem Overview allows for another person, a so-called "Devil's Advocate", to offer a rival interpretation of the issue. A peer reviewer has input into the Analysis/Triangulation stages, offering perhaps different views of what is and what is not important. Finally, the collaborator is presented with the researcher's interpretation of interview data in three separate respondent checks - after the interview itself, after the reconstruction of data, and at the stage of Report Generation - to allow collaborators final say over any interpretation of their experience.

Carney's CIM - A Summary

The main advantage of the CIM is its collaborator-centred approach. Any information that arises is shaped by the collaborators - they determine what is important and tell the researcher about it using both spatial and verbal means provided in the interview stage. The researcher's job is to offer a supportive environment and proper tools to allow the collaborators to tell their story. The biases of the researcher are unlikely to creep into the interview stage. Peer and collaborator checks throughout the entire process make it difficult for bias to emerge in analysis or report generation.

There are drawbacks to the CIM. The inability to narrow the field of inquiry through direct questioning of the collaborator has the potential to produce a great deal of superfluous information. Capturing information in its social context is a little like mining gold - the ore is very precious but is surrounded by a lot of plain rock that is of little use. The effort to portray the experience of collaborators is correspondingly time-consuming, limiting the scope of inquiry to, at most, a small group of collaborators.

In addition, the CIM was not designed to facilitate a longitudinal inquiry - it is basically a one-interview process developed for case study research. The CIM was not really designed to track behaviour or changes in attitude in a continuous investigation over a period of weeks or months, thus the task for this research project was to preserve the methodological integrity of the CIM's collaborator-centred approach while at the same time adapting it to follow how collaborators feelings change over time.

The Adapted CIM

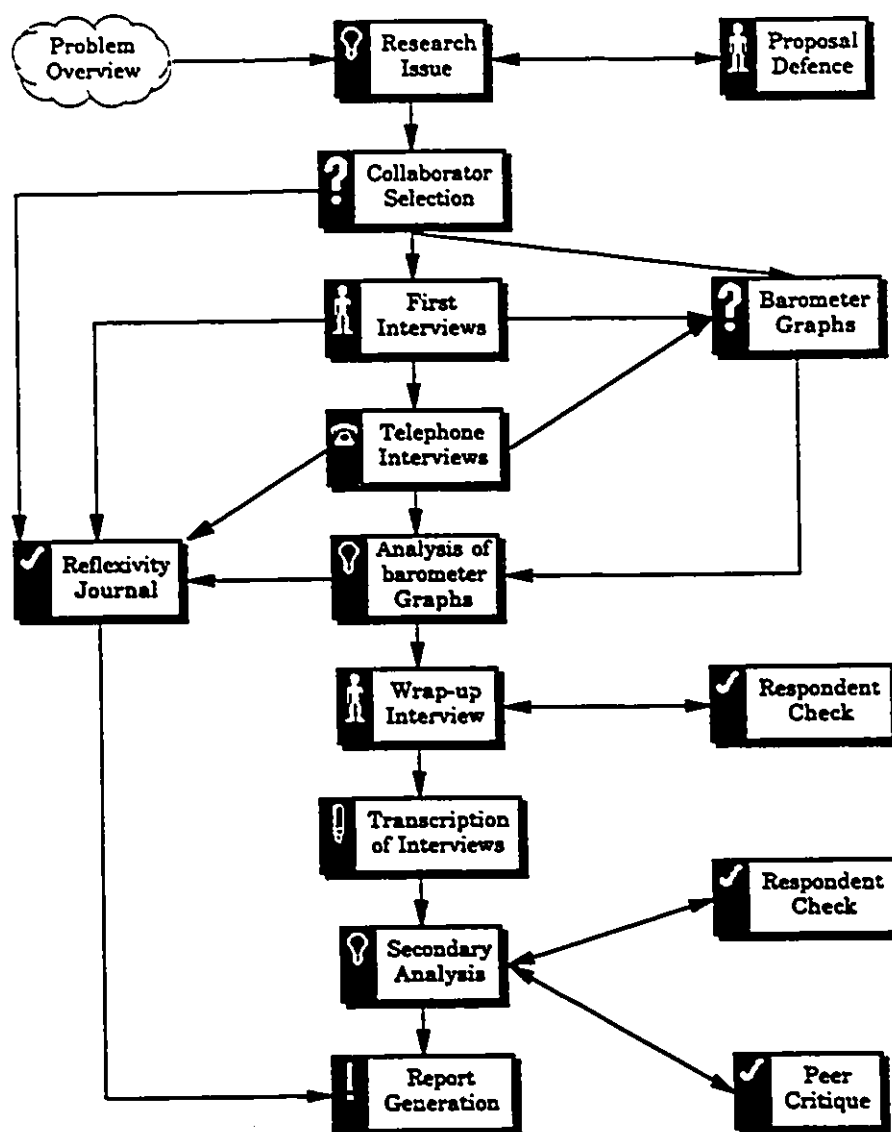
Qualitative studies of political information use are few and far between, and there is thus little in the way of a large body of past research upon which a methodological approach can be based. While the CIM is a very versatile tool, it is quite new and still in the early stages of acceptance and

application. To date, it has been used in studies of divergent topics, from alcoholism treatment programs (Edmonds, 1989) to personal banking (Maillet, 1992). It has not, however, been applied in a longitudinal fashion to the study of political information use. The closest application of the CIM would be a study of voter reaction to negative political advertising by Carney which was ongoing at the time of writing (Carney, Personal Communication, February, 1994). Even in that case it was employed as a one-time data gathering tool and not to monitor the development of behaviour or opinions over time.

The task of this study was to adapt a new qualitative approach to examine where a small sample of people got their political information in the 1993 Canadian federal election. The investigative process adapted from the CIM for this purpose is outlined in Figure 3-4. It shares many of the components of the original method as explained in the previous section. It also attempts to preserve the non-leading nature of the investigation and the respect of the collaborator as the only true source of information. At the same time, it does question respondents over an extended period of time - hopefully utilizing the advantages of qualitative investigation in a longitudinal time frame. While the diagram is basically a simplified and extended version of the CIM explained previously, there are points which bear further elaboration.

The research issue was framed, not through interaction with a Devil's Advocate, but with guidance from the researcher's thesis committee. Two separate respondent checks were built in, one at the time of the wrap-up interview and another during the stage of Secondary Analysis. The stage of secondary analysis itself served as the locus of triangulation, where the

Figure 3-4: The Adapted CIM



interpretation of the researcher was compared to possible objections or alternate explanations from the peer reviewer and the collaborators themselves.

Where the adapted method differs greatly from the traditional CIM is the timing of the interview path. Carney places most information gathering within a single interview, where questions are used together with the cluster and forcefield exercises in an intensive application which may last for hours.

The adaptation extends the questioning part of the interview path over five weeks, asking the same nonleading questions to the respondents. It then concludes the path with the implementation of the clusters and forcefields in the wrap-up interview. In addition, it adds a barometer-form measurement to measure the collaborators' weekly opinion changes and then asks them to explain any trends in the wrap-up interview.

The adapted method thus allows for questioning over time, but sacrifices some of the CIM's depth. Instead of gaining deep insight into the collaborators' reality through intensive interviewing, the adaptation asks the same questions over a period of weeks - gaining different responses to the same queries and only a passing knowledge of their social circumstance. It also shifts the focus of analysis somewhat, in that information gained from the interviews makes up the bulk of the data set, while the clusters and forcefields are reduced to a secondary role.

The CIM was also designed to gather information on a central topic and then try to explain that topic. In other words, the topic of study is the focus of inquiry. The adaptation, however, gathered information on the collaborators' perceptions of the election, but intended to analyze only one part of what was gathered, namely what the collaborators said in relation to their information use. This represents a level of abstraction that was not really intended in the original Carney method.

Practical Implementation

Ten voters were selected on the basis of informal personal contact with community organizations, with an aim of selecting articulate community activists for participation. This number fell to nine when one collaborator left the study after the second week. The remaining collaborators participated for the duration of the study period.

The collaborators were all chosen from the riding of Windsor-Lake St. Clair and followed through the latter half of the 1993 federal election in order to determine where they got their information. The riding in question was chosen because it was thought to be the Windsor-area race which featured the greatest potential for upset of an incumbent member.

The only additional criteria for collaborator selection - other than residency in the riding, Canadian citizenship and intent to vote - were that the collaborators not be card-carrying members of any political party or be

planning to volunteer for one of the local campaigns. Any involvement in political activities was thought to have the potential to bias collaborator towards certain media stories and issues. Peripheral political activities - such as past involvement with a political organization or the display of a lawn sign - was not to be considered grounds for exclusion because they were not considered to constitute major involvement in political activities.

The collaborators were interviewed in the period from September 22nd to October 25th. Interviews were conducted on a weekly basis until election day, and then one "wrap-up" interview was conducted in the two weeks following to allow the collaborators to reflect on their perceptions of the campaign. The wrap-up interview and the primary contact interview were conducted face to face - all others were conducted over the phone.

This study adapted the CIM process by prolonging the questioning stage over a number of weeks and then completing the interview path with the cluster and forcefield exercises after the end of the campaign. In doing so, the vast majority of the data was represented by the transcripts of the interviews, which were the main focus of analysis. The clusters and forcefields, normally of equal or greater importance to the transcript, were treated as a secondary data source and as a reliability check for the information gathered in the interviews.

In all interviews, every attempt was made to make the tone as conversational as possible, while respecting the tenet of CIM that the

researcher's reaction to the collaborator should be neutral so as not to give the appearance of being interested in only certain aspects of the responses.

The questions asked in every interview except the final wrap up were variants of the following:

- Do you know anything about the campaign, political figures, or issues now that you didn't know last week (or before the campaign began)?
- Did you encounter or take notice of anything in the last week that sticks in your mind regarding the campaign?

(or alternately, "Have you encountered anything that made you think about the campaign?")
- How do you think the national party leaders did this week?
- How about the candidates in your riding? Did any of them do anything which caught your attention?

The first interview and subsequent telephone interviews were recorded on audio tape and then transcribed for later analysis.

In addition to the weekly interviews, other data collection techniques were used. The collaborators were asked to fill out a weekly barometer chart (example in Appendix 2) noting their feelings about national political figures, political parties and local candidates. The researcher monitored local and national media - the Windsor Star, CBC Morningwatch, the CKCO Evening News (CTV affiliate) news, and CBC Primetime television news - to keep track of significant media stories and events which the collaborators might have noticed. In the period immediately after the election, but prior to the final interview, the notation of media events was compared to the readings on

the barometer charts. In the final interviews, the collaborators were asked to explain discrepancies or wide swings in opinion.

The final wrap-up session employed the full set of interview tools outlined in the CIM, including clusters, forcefields and direct questioning. Collaborators were asked to draw clusters and forcefields on their views of the election and were asked to explain the most obvious trend evident from their barometer forms. Their ethical rights as research collaborators were explained again, and their input was requested into a further feedback loop in which the results of the study were presented for their critique after final analysis.

Information Gathering and Analysis

The information gathered during the investigation came in various forms. The weekly phone interviews were transcribed and made up a data set of over one hundred pages of single-spaced text. The collaborators' barometer recordings were translated into graphs that suggested how their opinions changed over the course of the campaign. The researcher monitored select media and kept track of major stories on both the national and local level. The final wrap-up interview related the collaborators' reflections on the campaign in the form of clusters, forcefields, and explanations of their opinion swings.

The large amount of information produced from these various techniques could be approached from many different angles. This investigation tried to determine where the collaborators said they were getting their information and how they talked about different information sources. Specifically, the analysis concentrated on what Yin (1984) would call "pattern matching". The researcher tried to extract patterns from the information gathered that could be applied to the general information use of the study group. In doing so, the concentration was not on the factors specific to each individual - although those are included in the analysis. Rather, an attempt was made to find broad patterns in respect to information use in the experience of the collaborators.

Chapter Four
Research Findings

Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the investigation laid out in Chapter Three. Specifically, it looks at where the collaborators said they got their information during the 1993 Canadian federal election.

The methodology employed in this investigation approached the issue of political information use with as few assumptions as possible about the potential outcome. The adapted Collaborative Inquiry Methodology (CIM) prompted the collaborators in a non-leading manner to relate their perceptions of the campaign. The researcher then analyzed their comments and representations of the election to determine where they said they were getting their information.

While the data gathered concerned *how* the collaborators perceived the election, the analysis looked at *where* they said they were getting their information, a level of abstraction not normally employed in CIM investigations. This question was the central concern of this investigation. An important part of what sources of information they cited was how they talked about these sources - that is, the context in which their comments were made. One of the strong points of using a qualitative approach is that the data gathering process captures a measure of the social context of the

participants, and this social context must then be included in a discussion of what they said.

The findings presented in this chapter will include contextual information to give the reader a sense of not only where the collaborators said they were getting their information, but how they talked about the different sources of information. The ability to provide such context in the analysis, however, is limited somewhat by the nature of the adapted CIM used in this investigation. Most of the data gathering was done through phone interviews, so an analysis using the traditional CIM's emphasis on situational and interpersonal cues was not possible to the same extent. The adapted method that was employed did not use the lengthy, in-depth interviews that characterize traditional collaborative inquiry, but repeated four brief questions over a number of weeks and completed the process with a face-to-face wrap up interview that allowed the collaborators to look back over the campaign. Clusters and forcetields were used at the end of the process to give general insight into the collaborators' perceptions and to act as a check against possible deception. As such, they were used as secondary data sources and would not have been useful for cluster analysis.

Contextual information can and will be presented, therefore, but only to the extent that is possible from the information gathered through the adapted CIM.

The data will be presented in the following manner. The collaborators will be introduced with specific reference to their backgrounds and general perceptions of the election. The themes relevant to information use that emerged from the interview transcripts will be presented in an aggregate picture of where they said they were getting their information.

Any patterns that emerged in the study of these themes will be discussed, with specific reference to any qualitative difference that may be evident between different information themes.

The triangulation procedures employed will be explained to show their role in further refining the analysis and acting as a check against subjectivity. The findings of the components discussed will then be drawn together in a collective summary.

Introduction to the Collaborators

The collaborators who participated in this investigation came from a wide variety of social backgrounds. Some of the collaborators were very verbal, talking about themselves at great length, while others limited their conversation to merely answering the questions they were asked. This section introduces the collaborators to the reader, at least to the extent that

the researcher got to know them. Cases where the collaborators were reluctant to provide information have been noted for the reader.

Collaborator A

Collaborator A was a woman in her early fifties, married with one son. She worked as a social worker for a community organization, running several outreach programs, including drop-in support for youth and help for single mothers. Her work brought her into contact with a distinctly disadvantaged part of society.

She did not view the election, as one might expect from her professional orientation, in terms of interventionist social policy or favouring an expanded role of government. While she did refer to her experiences at work quite often, her views towards politics tended to emphasise her conservative personal values, such as hard work and thrift.

Because working in the areas that I work in and dealing with the people that we deal with...mostly low-income people...tend to think that...people need more and we have to spend. I think when I've tried to look at the big picture, I know that's not the way to do it because my generation has spent too much through government...I look at my children and in particular if I have grandchildren...what am I leaving for them?... They're not going to have the same opportunities that my children have been able to have...I have to stop spending and I'm putting a hold on and saying no...As an agency we have to do that all the time and we have always been poor. But we've survived and we've managed quite well. Bigger is not always

better...So I want politicians and I want government to do the same thing.

She spoke highly of the Conservative Party's commitment to fiscally responsible government. Particularly, she often talked about the candidates in terms of qualities she valued, such as "determination" and "loyalty."

I like Kim Campbell, I really do. I really like what she says and I particularly like the way she's conducting herself, that she's not backing down...She's not giving in to interest groups and to what a lot of people want to hear her say. She's not saying that government will get us out of all this. She's sticking to their platform and...we all have to tighten and look at how we spend what we do...I don't like all the platforms they've put forward...but I firmly believe that we have to cut the deficit and we have to work at it and we have to work at it as a nation.

Her evaluation of Tom Porter, the local PC candidate, was based on her personal experience with him through her job and the perception of many of the same sort of qualities.

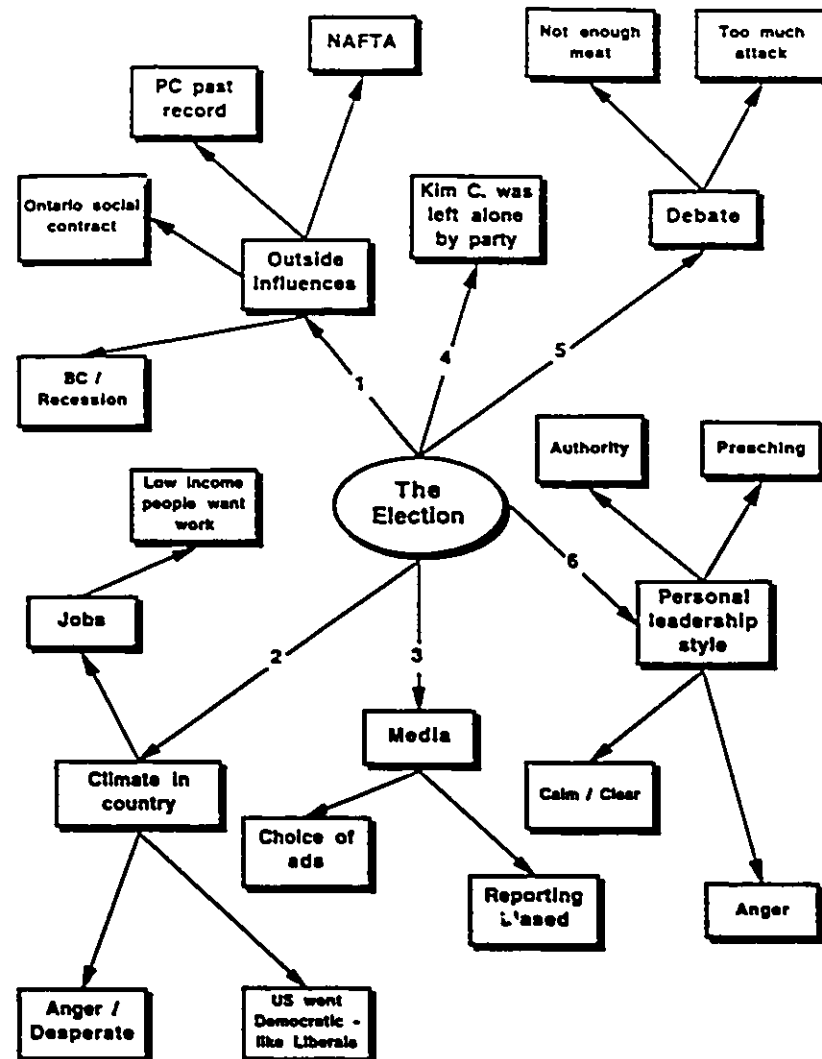
Well, I really like Tom Porter...particularly because of the job I do here. I go to council and deal with the municipality twice a week...and I do tend to really know what council's about and how they vote on issues...He has...been very consistent in his decisions. He doesn't back down...One of my core values is loyalty and when I look at other people even though I may disagree with them totally at least they are loyal to what they believe in...They're not following the whim of the (Interest Groups)...so I really appreciate and respect that about him.

These values tended to be the frame through which she saw much of the election. She viewed voting as a responsibility, and talked about the impact that today's decisions would have on future generations, especially her children and grandchildren. She saw the Liberal party as distinctly irresponsible based on their past performance, saying that they had "repackaged" their old policies and that they would try to "spend their way out of this recession." As the election progressed and it became apparent that the Liberals were going to form the next government, her tone turned decidedly negative.

You try to really find a balance between the social work that I do and working with people and yet trying to leave legacies for my children and grandchildren and maintaining what we have as really good things in Canada...I find myself getting somewhat discouraged probably for the first time in my adult life...Since I've been able to vote, I've stood up for what I believe in, thinking it doesn't matter. My vote doesn't matter. It doesn't really count and I can't make a difference.

Her reaction to the Liberal's election win corresponded with how she reflected on the election through her cluster diagram (Figure 4-1). Her top four choices related to the defeat of the Conservatives, from "Outside Influences" on the voter (branch #1) to biased reporting of the media (branch #3).

Figure 4-1 Cluster of Collaborator A



Collaborator A referenced her information to a wide variety of interpersonal and media sources. These were mixed between information related to her job and her personal use of the media. When she talked about her media use, she showed a surprising level of self-awareness about

how her view of the world might be influenced by what she did for a living.

I do a lot of reading. I read Macleans. I read the Globe and Mail, the Toronto Star, (and) the Financial Post...I watch a lot of Canadian TV. I really try to keep myself as well informed as possible...Just because of...the type of agency we are we tend to get a lot of policy pieces from...not so much from the national parties but we get a lot of information from various and sundry places about poverty and business...So I try to get enough for a rounded out information base...It's easy to become very focused on low-income and poverty (issues) and just look at it from that one side.

In total, Collaborator A talked about the campaign and candidates in terms of her conservative personal values. She was conscious that someone in her profession might be preoccupied with social issues. While she did talk about the treatment of these issues in the campaign, they were evaluated through the framework of her personal values.

Collaborator B

Collaborator B was a woman in her forties who worked in the financial services field. She mentioned a son who was in the military, but did not mention a husband in any of her interviews.

She was articulate and, if not openly enthusiastic about her participation, appeared to take it seriously.

Her job involved directing the investment portfolios of clients and counselling them about new investments. This made her very aware of how

the election could influence financial markets and the value of the dollar, and she tended to view the election in relation to these concerns.

I think I'm worried from a business point of view to tell you the truth about the election. If we get a minority government with the Conservatives or even the Liberals if there are no Conservatives in there, probably the dollar will stay stable and the market will stay pretty stable. But if the Bloc Quebecois takes off on its own in a strong manner we're likely to have problems with the dollar. So I'm concerned...from that point of view.

Generally, she spoke about the election in terms of what it would do to the financial state of the country. She saw Canada as being in a state of decline and mentioned the "glory days" of Ontario's once-booming economy several times. She agreed with people she talked to who wanted the country to be the way it had been in the past.

They want to go back to the Liberal in the federal and maybe Conservative in their provincial (government) because that's when we had the best time. That's when everything was going well and Ontario had a 4 star rating and everybody was happy. But some of the things that got done there are the root of the problems now, but that's the way people look at it.

Her job required her to have current information on financial and political trends. She referred to many financial papers during the interviews, and was in constant contact with clients and fellow professionals

through local Kiwanis and Rotary meetings. She shared her concerns about what she was reading during the election with her co-workers.

I believe (the article on the deficit) was in the Report on Business Magazine. The Globe and Mail for October 1993. And I can't tell you who wrote it...but...I mentioned it to one of the fellows at the office whose opinion I really value and said "Did you read that?" and he said "Yes, by the time you got to the end of it you were really convinced!" A very good case for...Keynesian and neo-Keynesian economics.

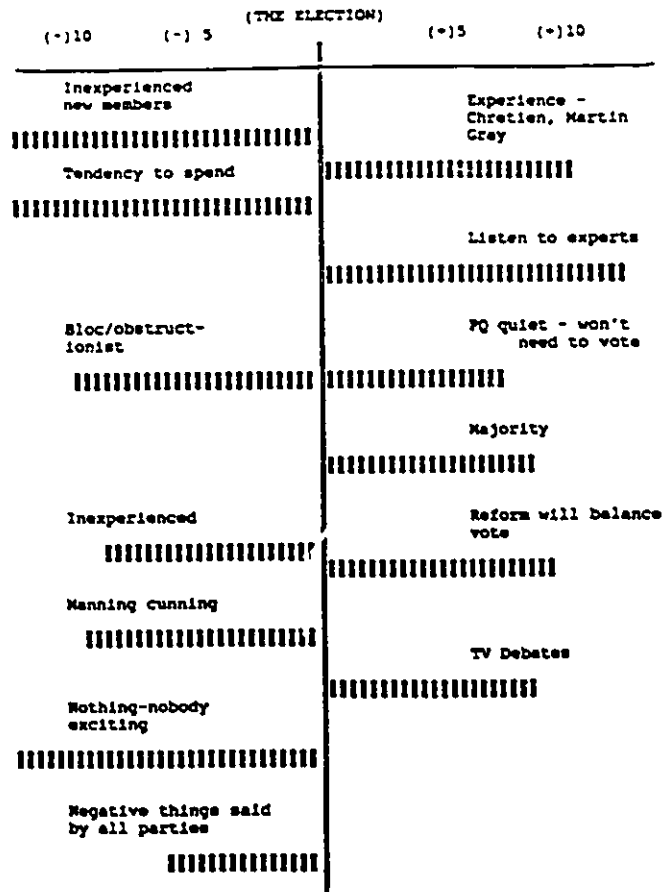
Her concern with financial matters was reflected in her forcefield on how she perceived the election (Figure 4-2). The inexperience of the new Members of Parliament rated (-10), as did their tendency to spend. This was balanced by the positive views of the experience of older members of the Liberal Party and her hope that the new government would "listen" to such experts.

Her media sources of information were intertwined with interpersonal ones, as she often discussed articles and trends with co-workers and friends.

When asked where the information had come from for one of her general comments, she summarized her media use.

I try and read The (Windsor) Star but by the time I get home and its late and a lot of times I don't get it read...(A friend) is an avid reader she just devours everything so if there's anything that comes up she tells me about it...I read the Financial Post and the Times...I hear the news on the radio in the morning..on the CBC

Figure 4-2 Forcefield of Collaborator B



While her concern with the economic side of the election was obvious, she also talked about the election in terms of social concerns. Most notably, she mentioned how Kim Campbell's candidacy had made her realize how sexist some of her acquaintances were.

In this business you tend to skim everything really fast anyway so you get impressions on how a lot of (people haven't) changed that

much. I know that there are a lot of men in my age bracket that are a lot more sexist than I thought they were.

She related several anecdotes about sexism during the interviews, and this corresponded with her worries about the right-wing views of the Reform Party. In the final interview, she said "some of their policies are enough to scare the Jesus out of you...I've always been uneasy about fundamentalism, no matter what guise it comes in."

This wariness of the Reform Party and Preston Manning was evident in both her forcefields and clusters. In the forcefield (Figure 4-2) she viewed Manning as "cunning", and gave that factor a high negative rating. Her cluster talked about Manning's "Fundamentalism" and she portrayed the party as "scary".

While she did talk a lot about financial matters, she was not preoccupied with them, and did see room for social concerns in politics.

Now I can't agree with everything that (McCurdy) says...My leanings because of the business are more right wing, but on the other hand I don't know what we would do if we didn't have dedicated people like him with those points of view in Parliament.

Overall, Collaborator B talked about the election in relation to its potential impact on financial markets, and indirectly her job. She did, however, mention considerations which were personal and tended to reflect

her problems with right wing policies and need to reflect social concerns in government.

Collaborator C

Collaborator C was a woman in her late forties with two children. In many ways she was a traditional housewife, managing a home and volunteering for community organizations while her husband worked in a high-paying professional job. Her entire personality, however, was anything but traditional.

Collaborator C was very talkative and charismatic. She laughed and made jokes constantly, slipping words like "cool" into her conversation and talking about how "geeky looking" some of the candidates were. This translated into a decidedly wry view of politics.

I'm quite political but I think people don't *think*. I don't think they think, anyway. Everybody is talking about jobs and everything but they're not thinking about the people they elect. What do they want them to do? How are they going to solve the problem? What are we going to do about the GST? People don't *think* about it...It's just like the referendum. The referendum was a complicated issue but most people didn't really see how complicated it was although everybody said they got those books in the mail but I think they read about half a paragraph. (collaborator's emphasis)

Like Collaborator B, she was sensitive to the sexist comments she heard around her aimed at Kim Campbell. She mentioned that she perceived a double standard in the way the PC Leader was being treated.

People say "that woman!" If it was a man, would they say "that man?" No. They'd say that bastard or you know they wouldn't. It's a deprecating way of describing someone. I'm sensitive to it because I'm a woman. A lot of people aren't. But as a woman I notice they're overly critical.

Collaborator C did volunteer work with a number of community organizations. She hosted luncheons at her house and often talked about the opinions of her guests during the interviews. She spoke very highly of the people she volunteered with, and said they shared her dissatisfaction with "the way the country was going."

They are really are wonderful people because ..they volunteer to make all this money for this institution yet...Everybody sort of jacks us around...When you look at the whole thing and say why are we making...so much money for the (specific volunteer institution)...And the provincial cuts...We're looking at that and saying..."what's going on here? Does anybody care?" ... These are the nicest women I've ever met in my life. I mean it has nothing to do with the stature of the parties but....I don't know how they're gonna vote...I don't think they know how to vote. I don't think anybody on the street knows how to vote...It's one of the most confusing political times of my life...

She generally spoke of government as being inherently wasteful. In one of her volunteer roles she had administered grant money from the

federal and provincial governments and said that the money was basically "shovelled out" without thought of the end product. During the campaign she said she received "wasteful" mailings from Elections Canada. Her sister worked in Ottawa, and Collaborator C talked about how much money "those Ottawa people" make for a 35 hour week.

This contrasted with her view that her husband was overworked but was still subject to provincial government restraint programs.

That social contract is a nightmare! I (volunteer quite a bit) but I still think that when I see a person who works 70-80 hours a week and gets paid for 40 being asked to give another day or two I really get upset with that. I have a workaholic husband that's how I know...He (works for a local municipality). He goes to meetings at night. He's never home. He goes to work at quarter to seven and he comes home at 9 or 10, sleeps and that's his life...It's not particularly great for me and the kids but I mean it's a very demanding kind of job...That's the way jobs are if you want to do it right then you have to do it. Put in those kind of hours but he doesn't get paid for them.

Her concern with the social contract was evident in her forcefield and cluster exercises. She rated a combined category of "NDP Demise/Social Contract" at (-8) on her forcefield, while the social contract and the NDP took up path #2 of her cluster.

Her family concerns were interwoven with the way she looked at the state of the country and the election. Her son had graduated from university but was working at a low-paying sales job and still living at

home. She also related a lengthy story about her father's recent death, blaming cutbacks in health care.

My father died this spring. When we went to the hospital his stomach was hurting. He was in a lot of pain and...went in at 9 and...stayed in that room until 3:00 in the afternoon. Finally they decided it was serious so they took him upstairs and put him in a room....He got up with an IV attached, got up, went to the bathroom, fell over and had a heart attack on the floor. There were not...enough nurses to make sure he was supervised. My mother was in the room but didn't think...you know? That heart attack led to his death two days later. The hospitals have no people in there. They have no nurses. (Its) staggering what's happening to the health care...I don't know that anybody has the answers.

In her views of the election, she seemed to be able to separate such experiences from blaming any one particular party. She spoke highly of the NDP candidate even though her husband was suffering under the social contract. She talked about wasteful government but was critical of Preston Manning. She avoided blaming one party or government and based her views on a broader perspective, saying "I don't know. I think Canada is not in very good shape but I was in England this summer and I realized that the whole world is in rotten shape, so I didn't take it so personally."

In total, her perception of the campaign was coloured by her family life, her volunteer experiences and a broad sense of perspective that recognized there were problems with the country but avoided blaming any one party or candidate.

Collaborator D

Collaborator D was a woman in her early thirties, married, with three small children. She worked as a caregiver in the home, and talked proudly about her university degree. She was very vocal in her opinions and talked freely to the researcher about the campaign.

Her family was the central focus of her life and took up most of her time. The interviews were scheduled around the times when her children would be least active. She did not talk a great deal about specific information in the media, and she admitted candidly in the first interview that she had little time for such things as newspapers and television, but looked to her family instead as a source of information.

I personally talk to a lot of people instead of reading. I talk and discuss my views with parents on both sides of the family. My family per se is not really politically knowledgeable but...my family-in-laws I guess you could say are more into it.

She was very proactive in getting information on the election, however. On several occasions she called the offices of riding candidates and asked them to send her information.

I called the offices and Greg Novini actually called me back instead of having, you know, his sidekick or campaign manager or whatever...I did receive a call back from the Liberal campaign manager which I wasn't too keen on because I asked him questions and he kind of dogged it. But he dogged it really well because I didn't realize that

he dogged it until I got off the phone (and thought) "What about this question I asked?"

The researcher was concerned that she might have been going out of her way due to her participation in the study, but she said that she did similar things "in the last election."

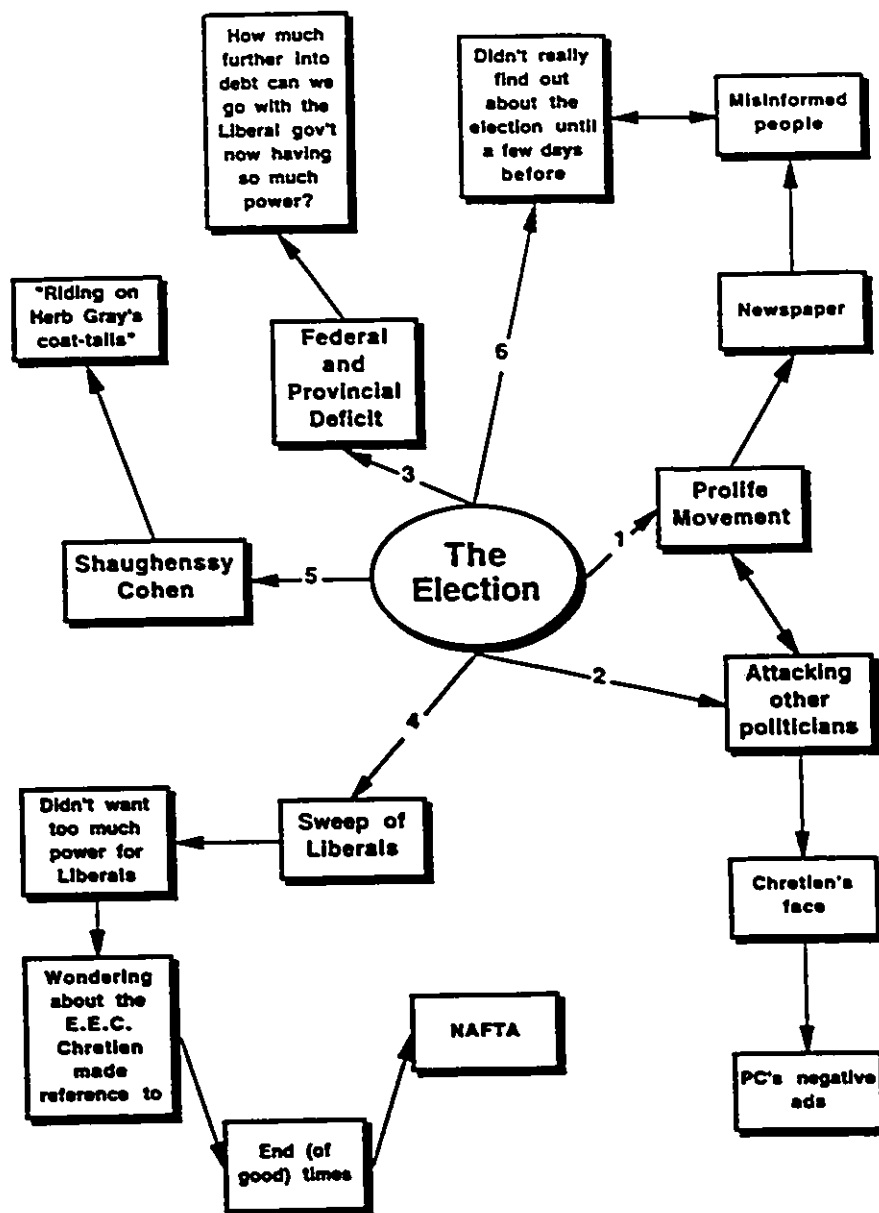
She talked about Chretien in a respectful manner she did not accord the other leaders. She spoke glowingly of him as a "big bald frenchman" who was "not one to bullshit." When asked why she felt this way, she talked about her family's French heritage.

I've got a lot of French background but I don't have the French culture. My French culture has been lost. Now my husband, his mother is extremely French. She's given him all of the French culture. He speaks French. He's basically grown up in a French background. Now when they have that big political thing about French language and whatnot that was a really big issue with the family. So I've learned a lot about the French issues. I'm starting to speak French myself and I'm raising my kids in a French school....I'm learning from (my mother-in-law) all about the French and I just think Chretien...being French...understands more about the French background...I think that's basically why I like Chretien. Not just because he's French but because...he knows the issues...do you know what I mean?

The role her family played in her evaluation of the election was complemented by their devout Roman Catholicism. In her final interview, her cluster (see Figure 4-3) and forcefields rated pro-life concerns very

highly. She rated her belief that a Liberal government would not introduce anti-abortion

Figure 4-3: Cluster of Collaborator D



legislation as a (-10) on her forcefield, while the pro-life movement and its relationship to politicians was the first branch of her cluster (Figure 4-3). She also brought up what her priest had said about the election.

I went to church on Sunday and the Priest said "Look. I'm voting. I'm not going to tell you what I'm voting. But I'm telling you should vote. It's your civic duty to vote, to find out, get educated and vote, because if you don't vote, this is what happens...". And he went on and told us about Communists and how this and that can happen...so...(I) thought I'd better get my derriere out there and figure out who I'm voting for.

It appeared that her view of the election was determined by her traditional lifestyle that emphasised her family and religious beliefs. She was preoccupied with raising three small children, and the time demands this involved limited her exposure to information and general thinking about the campaign. She turned to her family for information and sought it out on her own, but did so under the constraints of her lifestyle.

Collaborator E

Collaborator E was a woman in her forties, married with no children. She did not have a full time job, but did do volunteer work with a community organization. She was a very soft-spoken person who seemed eager to talk but was very reluctant to make declarative statements.

Instead, she prefaced almost all her comments with denial modifiers such as "I don't know, but."

Although she kept commenting on how she did not have enough information on the campaign, she seemed to have a grasp of what the broad issues were. She did not, however, attribute most of her information to identifiable sources. When asked by the researcher at the start of the interviewing what she had learned since the campaign began, she was tentative at first, but went on to give a fairly broad overview.

That's kind of hard to say. I know that the Liberal party for instance is talking about I believe it's six...I gotta get my facts straight here...billion or something...job creation program...All the whole details I don't know because I haven't really taken the time to find out exactly what it is...Of course Kim Campbell...hasn't really said yet what she's going to be doing and we're kind of up in the air with that. The Reform Party....I know what they're standing for and it..can be vague in some ways...I just felt that I would like to know more about it. The Bloc Quebec...I don't know too much about that...I feel myself that that's more of a Quebec issue because it's separatist and yes it's going to affect us as Canadians...What issues they're bringing up I'm not too sure either except for separatism (and)...sovereignty. There's that new party...the national? ...what is it?...I'm not sure exactly what it is and I haven't got too much details on that and hopefully I'll read more about it.

Her perceived need for more information gave her interviews an apologetic tone. She brought up many pieces of information, but then back away from them saying "I really don't know anything about that." She was

conscious of this lack of decisiveness and said she had first noticed it in the last federal campaign.

In past performances I can truthfully say that I had (gone) with one party...You know...who the leader's going to be and how their performance is...Before you got to the polls you reviewed each candidate thoroughly. (last time)..I found that I had a very hard decision almost right up until I voted...Because normally I had pretty well stayed with the same party, but then there were certain issues and things that I wasn't agreeing with and I thought...maybe a change is good.

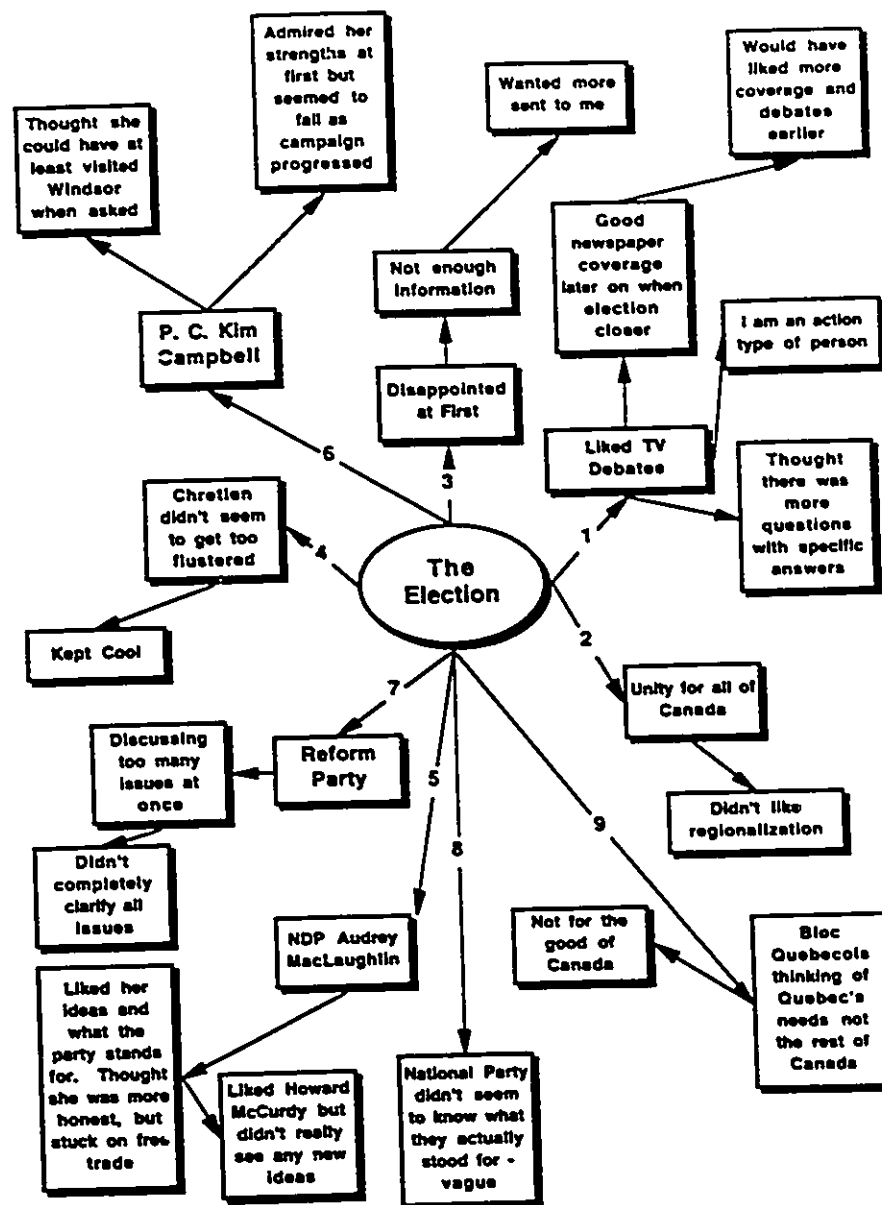
Her clusters and forcefields indicated that she was more comfortable with sketching out how she felt than talking about it. Her cluster (Figure 4-4) was one of the most extensive drawn by members of the study group. She even mentioned different information sources in it, something that other collaborators did not do generally.

The fact that she perceived that she was deficient in information was reflected in her cluster. She said she wanted more media coverage (Branch #1), that there was not enough information and she wanted more (Branch #3), and that she wanted clarification on the stands of the Reform and National Parties (Branches #7 and #8 respectively).

Overall, she said more than she realized about the campaign. While she may have felt - for whatever reason - that she did not know anything

about the campaign, she did bring up new information and credit it to sources in much the same way that her fellow collaborators did. Where she

Figure 4-4 Cluster of Collaborator E



differed was in the uncertain manner in which she presented the information, a manner that left many thoughts incomplete and many pieces of information unattributed.

Collaborator F

Collaborator F was a woman in her mid-forties, married, with two children. She worked at a local hospital. In general, she was the least verbal of all collaborators and came across as very reluctant to volunteer information, although she had seemed eager to participate in the first phone contact. In subsequent interviews, the researcher did not establish a good rapport with her.

This may have been due to performance anxiety on her part. During the first interview, she appeared very tense, but relaxed immediately when the interview appeared to be over. The researcher then rephrased the questions and turned the tape recorder back on and captured additional information.

She seemed to think that she was being judged on what she said, despite repeated attempts by the researcher to explain to the contrary. In the final interview, when the cluster was explained and she was asked to draw one of her own, she frowned and exclaimed "I didn't know I was going to be back in school!"

Her reluctance to speak coloured all her interviews. While most collaborators spoke in generalities, she tended to be even more general in her comments than they were. Her reluctance to speak softened somewhat when the interviews shifted to the telephone.

She expressed a strong dislike for the NDP in many of her comments, and was asked by the researcher why she felt this way when she made one particular statement about Howard McCurdy.

I'm not an NDP-er so I don't particularly like him. I can't...

Interviewer: There's no right or wrong answer...I'm not...

No...(quickly)...I know. It's just that I'm a government worker so I feel very strongly about the NDP. I guess I don't particularly like Audrey McLaughlin. And I don't like the way the NDP goes about it so I guess I sort of sour against all NDP's.

She went on to talk about her involvement in the social contract issue, particularly her worries about Audrey McLaughlin. The researcher asked her if she thought the federal NDP might follow policies similar to those of the Ontario party.

Yes I do (very emphatically)! I'm scared of the NDP. I think that they might tend to increase the welfare roles and cut back even farther. We can't have any more unemployed people in the country. It's probably going to happen if Audrey McLaughlin gets in...

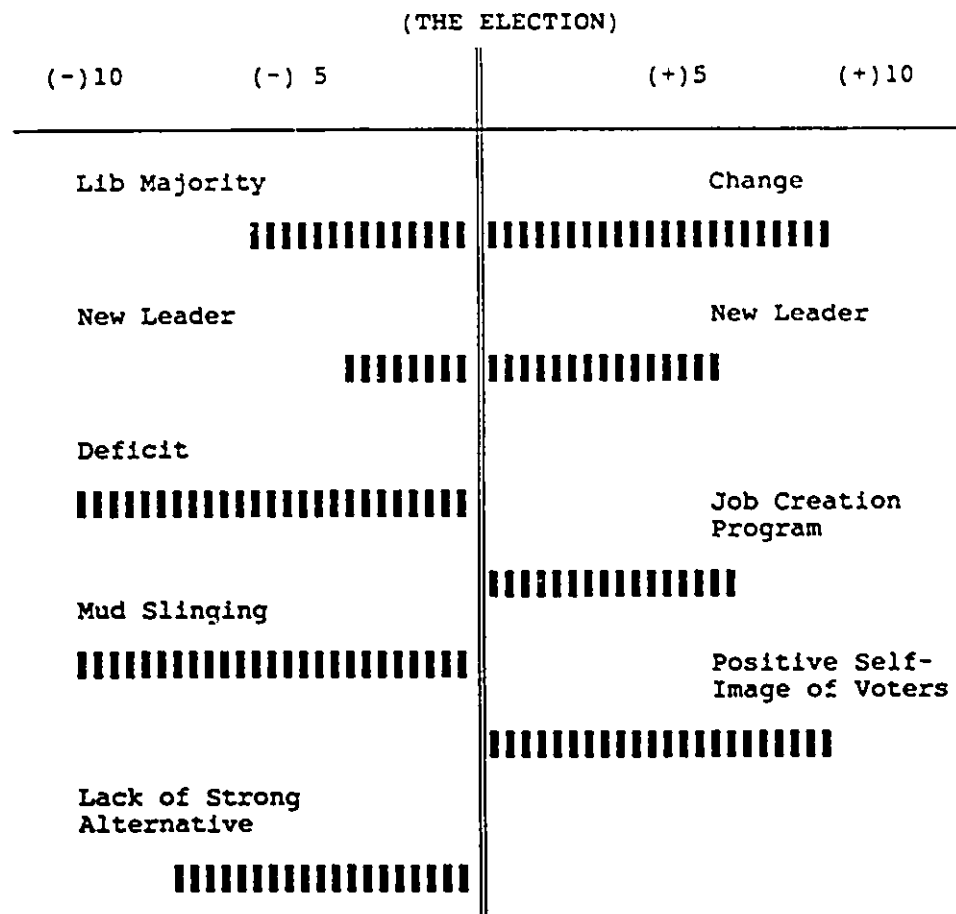
She mentioned very few conversations with her family or friends. Even though she worked at a hospital, presumably with people who shared her feelings about the social contract, she did not mention any conversations she had with her co-workers until the last interview.

We were talking about it in the staff room today. First time we talked about it. Yeah. It was quite a lively conversation. First time that we've really talked about it at work. And people are in the same boat I am. They don't know who to vote for. So a lot of them are stemming towards the Reform Party, but then somebody will say "well if you vote for the Reform Party that's like a protest vote - you don't want the Reform Party in". But who do you want in?

The forcefield Collaborator F drew was sparse, containing only six items (see Figure 4-5). Her mention of the Reform Party throughout the interviews carried into her forcefield, where she rated it a (+10). Her dislike of the NDP was obvious in the interviews, but did not carry over into her cluster and forcefield. She may have forgotten to mention it or did not think it relevant after the virtual disappearance of the party from national politics after the election.

Overall, it was difficult to understand how Collaborator F viewed the election because she was very brief with her comments on the phone and appeared tense during the face-to-face interviews.

Figure 4-5: Forcefield of Collaborator F



Collaborator G

Collaborator G was a male in his forties with two young children. He did not mention a wife or any close friends during the course of the interviews. He worked for the City of Windsor in a professional function.

Along with Collaborator F, he was one of the more hesitant participants in the study. During the face-to-face interviews - and to a lesser extent over the phone - he looked for guidance as to what was expected of him, and was uncomfortable at first with the non-leading nature of the questioning. This need for structure was also evident when he was asked to draw clusters and forcefields in the final interview. At that time he required much additional explanation, although the cluster he produced (Figure 4-5) was quite extensive. His responses were generally very linear, as he chose to talk about the campaign in definite categories. When he was asked the general question about his perception of the campaign, he thought for a minute and divided the matter into federal and local politics.

Locally obviously the situation (is that) the NDP has shown very poorly what they can do provincially. (In the riding) there is some concern for how the incumbent McCurdy will do also. (pause) Federally..I'm not too impressed with Kim Campbell or the conservatives or Audrey McLaughlin at this point.

This structured division in thinking is also evident in his cluster, where he produced a wide variety of relationships from only two main branches - local and national politics.

When he talked about local politics, he did bring up the theme of patronage. Specifically, he talked about a former PC candidate who had received political appointments from the federal Conservative government.

The...previous candidate Bruck Easton certainly had a lot of bad press which certainly didn't help the PCs...There's a lot of patronage even on the local level and with his family...That reflects I think on the party, too, and on the individual....(Easton's) received a number of positions...He's on the Harbour Commission as well as his wife's involved with the Canada Pension (Board), a position that was previously free when it was deemed that they should have some sort of reimbursement. There is patronage there so I don't...I'm not partial to that sort of thing.

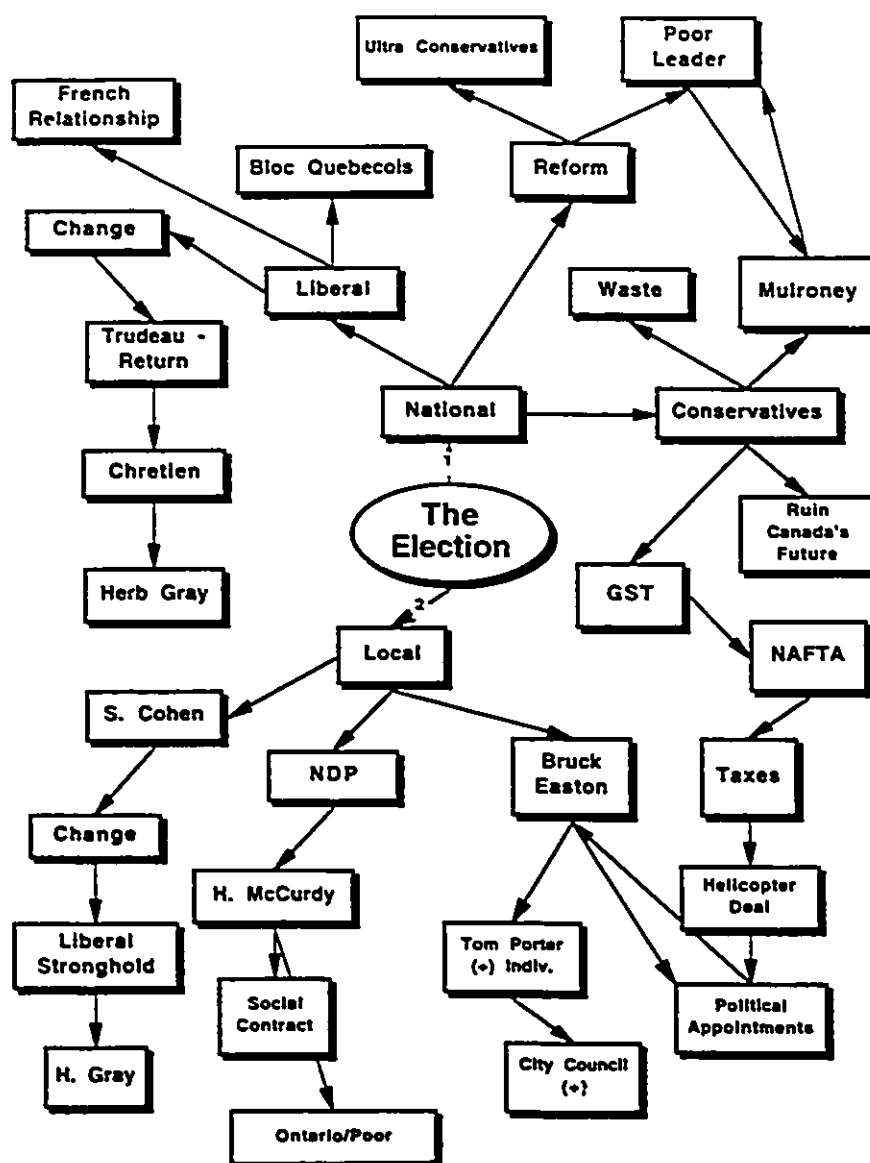
Political appointments were mentioned in both branches of his cluster and rated a (-4) in his forcefield. He revealed in one of the interviews that his knowledge of the incident was supported by interpersonal contact, as he had once been neighbours with the candidate in question.

Collaborator G attributed most of his information to newspapers, and this was evident in the way he responded to the interview questions. His answers read like broad reviews of the front page of the Windsor Star. While he talked in general terms about the election, his answers took on a summarizing tone, as if giving an update on the stories that were reported in the newspaper. When asked in one interview what he thought about the campaign that week, he replied:

A lot of mud slinging (is going on)...Kim Campbell is certainly trying to push her way through...Jean Chretien is doing a fairly decent job about coming forward a lot more than he was previously...Audrey McLaughlin I haven't heard that much about. I think she's been principally on the Western parts this week.

When asked by the researcher where this impression had come from, he simply replied "Oh, from the Windsor Star."

Figure 4-6: Cluster of Collaborator G



Collaborator G's young daughter did some volunteering for the Cohen campaign, but that did not seem to enter into his evaluation of the election. He did mention that she had met Chretien at the Liberal rally, but only seemed amused by her enthusiasm or proud of her participation.

In general, his view of the campaign was a solitary one. His reliance on the newspapers for information was evident in the way he spoke about campaign issues. The linear nature of the way he related his information showed in his categorization of information in both the interviews and the cluster exercise.

Collaborator H

Collaborator H was a male in his thirties, married with two children. He worked as an employment counsellor. He did not mention his wife or children during the interviews, but tended to focused on what he saw as the shortcomings of the political system.

Like Collaborator A, who worked in a social agency, he had some professional knowledge that pertained to the policies of the parties. He did speak about elements of the election in terms of his job.

...I think the biggest issue and the catch-phrases they keep bringing up because I work in this field is this job creation bullshit. I work in this field and I see what it does, these job creation things...The funds that the government keeps throwing against the wall for programs

and services and it's not working. So I think...one of (the parties') platforms... that they're using is job creation and I think it's very misleading...I think that working in that field, that's what I'm keying in on, this nonsense about that.

Collaborator H did not refer to his profession often during the interviews, although a change was evident in his manner at the final wrap-up interview. He volunteered that he had suddenly lost his job due to government cutbacks. This was obviously on his mind for the duration of the final interview - so much so that he chose not to draw his cluster on "the election" but took instead "jobs" as his central concept. His loss of employment happened after the last phone interview, however, and did not appear to characterize his ongoing perception of the election in the way that it did the final interview.

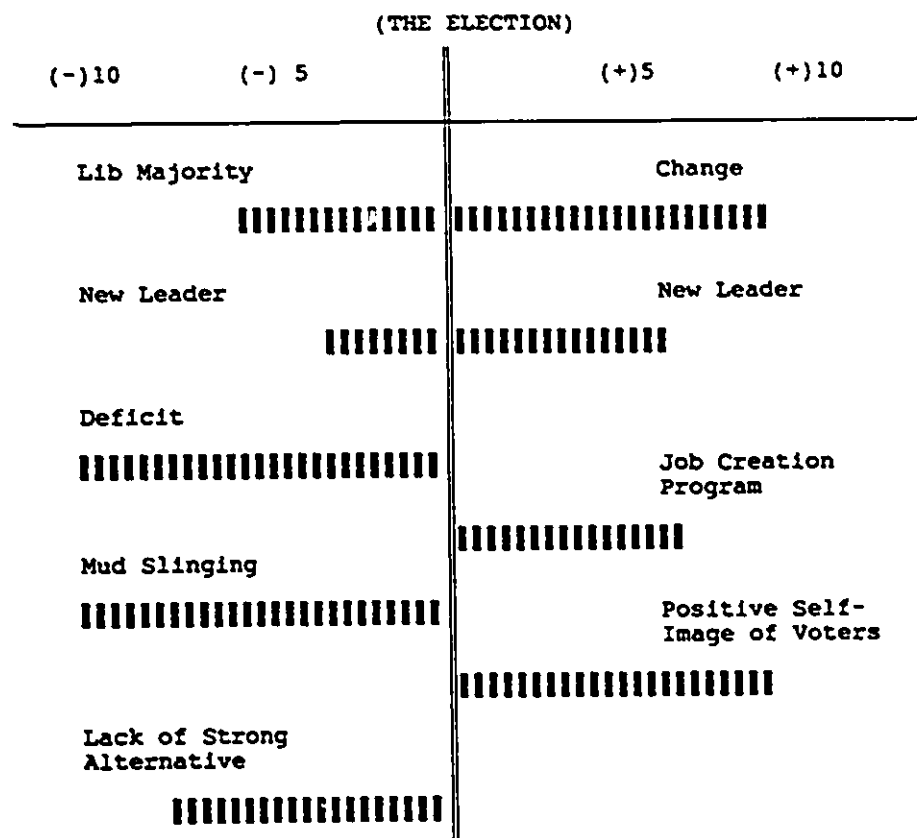
Collaborator H was a very cynical person by nature. He rarely mentioned politicians or the election without making some form of disparaging comment. He continually referred to politicians as "inefficient" and "crooks."

...I feel (the national and local candidates) could be more progressive. It seems when...when election time comes around they start propping up, pumping out this propaganda and showing what good they've done. Yet for the most part they stay reasonably well hidden without these campaigns. So all of a sudden you're hit with this propaganda (that says) "well, this is the great job I've been doing"...These people tend to stick close to the issues that are current and hot and unemployment is a hot issue right now so...I see them I guess more

than anything else. But I don't like the fact that they just pop up all of a sudden and start... producing this propaganda that's not really factual.

This may have just been a verbal mode he slipped into when talking about politics. His forcefield (Figure 4-6) was not overly negative, but

Figure 4-7: Forcefield of Collaborator H



showed a balanced, though general reflection on the campaign.

His cynicism tended to work in conjunction with a focus on the entertainment aspects of the campaign. He mentioned that he had seen several of the national party leaders while watching MuchMusic. In one case, he admitted that he learned more about politics through "entertainment" TV.

I did watch a thing on Much Music with Audrey McLaughlin so I found out a lot more about her than I knew before. More about the person before her political life which I found really fascinating, the fact that she had two broken marriages, she moved to the Yukon, you know, she sounds like a really interesting person. You know, so I think I'm more informed (by watching TV) that way.

The cynicism/entertainment approach he exhibited towards politics was evident in the number of times he mentioned the Natural Law Party. Their innovative commercials and promises to rectify Canada's problems through "yogic flying" and meditation made them a novelty on the political scene. He talked about their commercials, that he had mentioned them to friends, and he even spoke about them in the context of the leaders' debate. He had this to say the first time he mentioned them.

I think some rather humorous things have turned up...Have you seen anything on (the Natural Law Party)?...I think that's completely hilarious. It's in sinc with nature. They're gonna completely eradicate unemployment, the deficit...

Interviewer: Where did you see this?

They have some paid political spots on TV. And Doug Henning's been doing the talk show route. And I just can't believe it. They're giving these people airtime? You know, it's fine when you pay for it but you know when you've got some magician on...He was on a morning program this morning with...Valerie Pringle...She's on there..she's going "Geez, how can you be taken seriously? You're a magician and you want to change the politics?" They have 230...different ridings..you know..that they're campaigning in.

The way he looked at the election was coloured by these main themes. He had inside knowledge about one of the main electoral issues - namely job creation. He seemed to take his superior knowledge in this field and transfer it into a very cynical view of politics in general. The only time he was not being cynical was when he talked about items that may have had "entertainment value", such as interviews with party leaders on MuchMusic and the unconventional politics of the Natural Law Party.

Collaborator I

Collaborator I was an unmarried grade-school teacher in her twenties, bright and articulate. Before returning to finish teacher's college, she worked for a news network in Toronto. She did not open up a great deal during the interviews, but tended to give neutral assessments of media stories when asked about the campaign.

She admitted in the first interview that she was more conscious of the election because she had to teach her students about it.

I teach environmental studies..over at (a specific grade school) and...one of the units we have to cover is the federal government. So...I want to do a little election with them in class as the election happens on the 25th. I'm aware of when it happens but I'm not aware of the issues yet.

This worked in conjunction with the insight she had gained into politics from working in the media. She had a particularly close vantage point from which to judge Kim Campbell, in that she had covered her election as Conservative leader.

I understand I used to work at (a certain Toronto Station) so I ...know who (the leaders) are and what they were doing...I was actually at the Tory leadership convention...so Kim Campbell right now seems to be a strong favourite. Not necessarily her party, but the leader herself seems to be very popular with the Canadian people. She's straightforward. She has nothing to hide. Unfortunately, she's the head of the Tories.

Her early opinion of Kim Campbell did not carry over throughout the campaign, however. By the second interview she was already critical of Campbell, commenting on a statement the PC leader had made that was pounced upon by the national media. Collaborator I suggesting that Campbell was going against the wishes of her public relations people.

Well,...Kim Campbell...keeps putting her foot in her mouth. I couldn't believe she said - "we shouldn't be talking about the issues in the election." That was one of the stupidest things. I'm sure her...PR people were going nuts when she said that. She keeps sticking her

foot in her mouth and all Jean Chretien had to do is point a finger at her and laugh.

Collaborator I also spoke quite frequently about the NDP throughout the campaign, usually in general terms about how "people" wouldn't vote for them because of the stigma associated with the provincial NDP.

(Bob Rae)...did some things that a lot of people don't like...You can see even the people here around this area who are NDP-ers are trying to say "we're not part of the Ontario NDP, we're federal." So I think in this area for sure her party's going to suffer, so unfortunately she'll suffer.

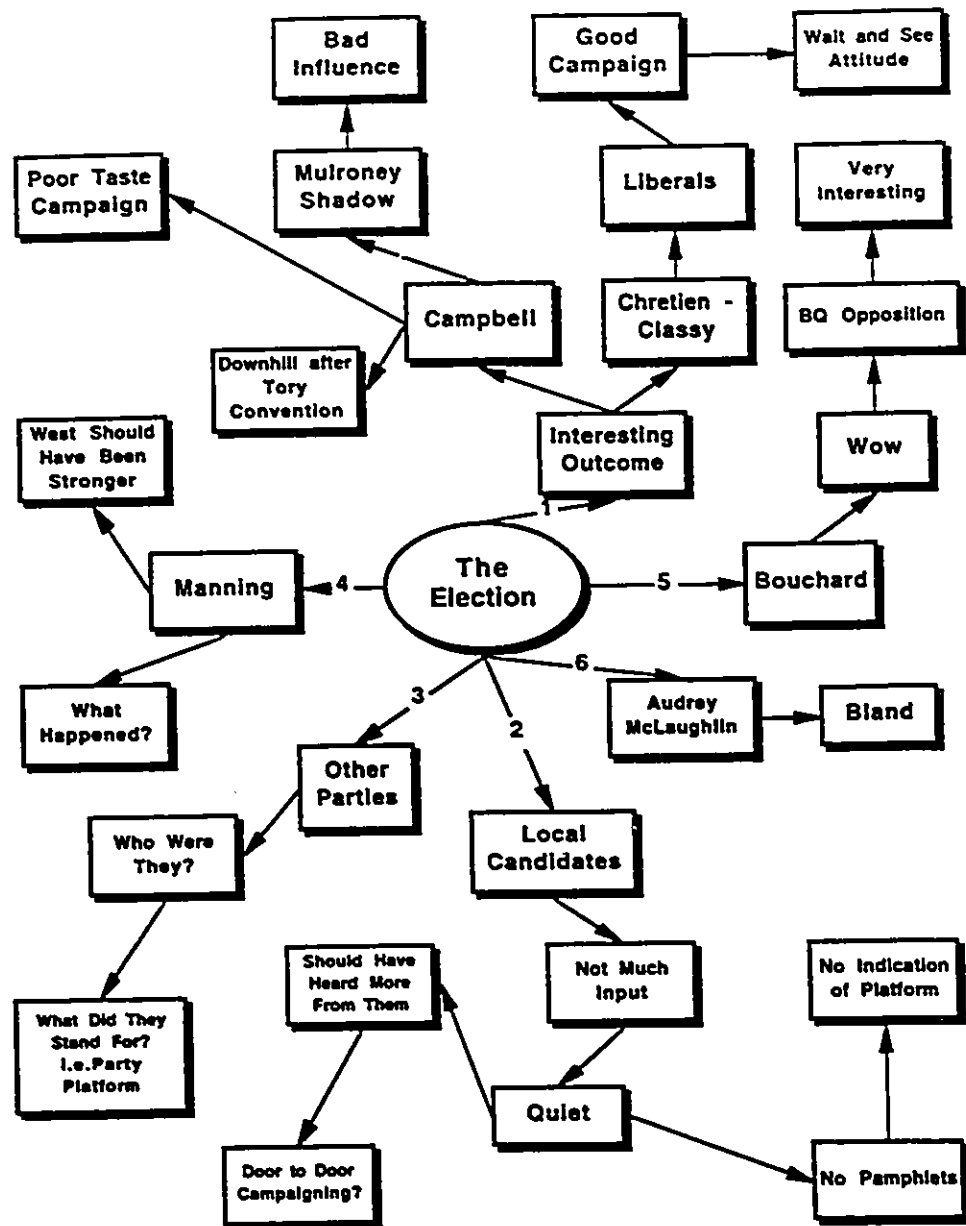
While many collaborators made this same assertion, in a much later interview she mentioned that her co-workers were "deeply affected" by the social contract. The views of her fellow teachers may have been a reference point, even though she did not mention many conversations with them.

The general tone of her references to the election took on the air of commentary, almost journalistic objectivity. She was very media-literate in that she was one of the few collaborators who mentioned the election in terms of the issues that were being reported in various national and local media. Her references to campaign information tended to be quite brief, however, and did not reveal a great deal about how she actually felt.

Her cluster reflected this summary approach to the campaign (Figure 4-8). While her branches were quite diverse, their contents were general.

Branch #1 ("Interesting Outcome") gave a rundown of the campaign, although she did note that Kim Campbell went "Downhill after Tory

Figure 4-8: Cluster of Collaborator I



Convention.” The only area that expressed a problem or negative view was Branch #2, which showed she felt deficient in information about local candidates.

In total, Collaborator I mentioned many media issues but tended not to give personal assessments of the campaign. She talked in a neutral tone in most cases, summarizing media stories when asked the standard questions about the campaign.

Interview Themes

Examining the experience of the collaborators began with the transcripts of what they said. The interview transcripts were reviewed by the researcher to see if there were any themes common to how the members of the study group talked about their information use.

This was not an easy process. During the interviews, the collaborators talked about the election in broad terms that were often unspecific. They talked about how the candidates looked, how the policies of the parties related to their lives, their past voting experiences - in short, a jumble of information was forthcoming when they were asked the standard questions.

The reply of one collaborator to the question "How do you think the candidates in your riding are doing?" illustrates the broad flow of information that characterized the responses of most collaborators.

I find it really quiet. Like just from where my perspective is. We actually have not had anybody yet...knock on our door. We've had some literature in the mail but...and I keep thinking to myself ...like usually...well I'm thinking to myself like...by this time haven't we usually had at least a couple of people knock on our doors? And we haven't had that and I don't know if it's just where I live...or...'cause we just moved..like we lived somewhere else in the last election. And it seemed that it was more busier...or people were coming to the door more often. So I find it kind of low key.

Looking at such a statement from the standpoint of information use, we can see that the collaborator mentioned two points that were relevant to information use - that she received literature in the mail and expected to be visited by canvassers. These references could be followed up through further questioning.

The reference to campaign literature, for example, was also imbedded in a particular context. The collaborator talked about the literature in terms of past experience with candidates and how the 1993 election was not measuring up to these expectations. This may have also related to a general theme that was common to the collaborator's specific view of the election. It is the job of this analysis to report the nature of such referencing in regard to its context, and then try to draw some form of

pattern out of the collective references of the collaborators through which the reader and researcher can gain a fuller understanding of the collaborators' experiences.

Broad Themes

When the members of the study group did attribute information to a specific source they spoke in terms of either someone they had spoken to or some form of media. There were thus two broad themes of media and interpersonal sources of information evident in throughout the interview transcripts. These themes were further divided by the researcher into sub-themes which specified where the collaborators said they were getting their information.

When collaborators talked about the media, for example, they spoke in terms of television, radio and newspapers. They also talked about various other media, such as pamphlets, direct mailings, and lawn signs.

Many people met the local candidates during the campaign or had past encounters with them which were recalled during the interviews. Other interpersonal sources of information included family members, friends and co-workers, and meetings with campaign volunteers.

A coding scheme was constructed based on their references and applied to the transcripts of the interviews to gather an aggregate picture of

where they said they were getting their information. A piece of information was considered to come from an "interpersonal source" when it was attributed by the collaborator to a person or group of persons. A "media source" was defined as information which was attributed to television, radio or printed material. The latter included pamphlets and other forms of printed advertising produced by the candidates or parties.

The themes for coding of the transcript were as follows:

(I_{pk}) Interpersonal - Personal Knowledge: The collaborator had direct interpersonal contact with a political figure from whom they received some form of information. Collaborator A, for example, had a very low opinion of a candidate and attributed it to bad encounters with him in the past. This qualified as an interpersonal source of information arising from direct interpersonal experience.

(I_{fc}) Interpersonal - Friend, Co-worker: The collaborator attributed information to a friend or someone in their workplace. Collaborator B, for example, said that she found that her co-workers were making "sexist" comments about a female candidate and that this affected her view of the election.

(I_{fm}) Interpersonal - Family Member: The collaborator attributed information to a family member. Collaborator D, for example, said her husband told her that the Reform Party was a "bunch of Communists". This piece of information was coded under the family category.

(I_o) Interpersonal - Other: A general category for all other citations of interpersonal sources. For example, almost all collaborators were contacted by volunteers from the major political

parties. Such an experience did not fit any of the other interpersonal categories, and was coded as 'other'.

(M_{tv}) Media - Television: The collaborator attributed a piece of information to television, such as a news story, advertisement, or the debate. Collaborator H, for example, said that he had watched forums on MuchMusic with both Kim Campbell and Audrey McLaughlin. This was coded as two separate references under the television category.

(M_p) Media - Print: This designation was applied to the mention of magazine or newspaper stories. Collaborator G related his opinions on editorials in the Windsor Star, while Collaborator D talked about the pro-life paper put out by her church. Both instances were coded as 'print' sources.

(M_r) Media - Radio: The collaborator attributed information to radio sources. Collaborator I, for example, said that she had heard about the election on the "Cam and Lisa Show".

(M_o) Media - Other: A general designation to code media references which did not fit within the definitions of the other categories. Many collaborators received pamphlets from the candidates and parties, and these were coded as 'other' to keep them separate from the category for print journalism.

These thematic categories were applied to definite references to media sources or specific people or groups of people. If a collaborator said that "people will vote Reform", such a statement was not attributable to an interpersonal or media source because there was no way to determine from the transcript where the information had come from. The researcher

pursued many such blanket statements with further clarifying questions, but often there were too many to explore.

A statement, however, that ran "We have friends who are dyed-in-the-wool Reformers and they said..." was coded as (I_{fc}) because it contained a definite attribution to an interpersonal source.

The matrix drawn from the coding scheme is represented in Figure 4-9. It shows that collaborators attributed information to media sources of information a total of 148 times, or an average of one and a half times per page of transcript. Interpersonal sources were mentioned a total of 84 times, or roughly half as often.

This simple count of the collaborators' attributions shows, at least on the surface, that traditional studies of information sources have been correct. In terms of an aggregate number of references, the members of the study group did mention media sources more than they did interpersonal ones. In fact, collaborators mentioned television more than attributions to family members, friends and co-workers, and direct encounters with the candidates *combined*.

There is an obvious drawback with trying to infer any meaning from the straight counting of references within a qualitative transcript. In an analytical matrix there is no way to convey the relative "weight" one reference may have had over another. For example, a collaborator may

mention 15 media stories briefly, but spend two or three pages talking about how they were profoundly affected by one incident.

Figure 4-9: Interpersonal and Media Sources Matrix

Where Col = Collaborators

	Interpersonal Sources					Media Sources				
Col	I _{pk}	I _{ic}	I _{im}	I _o	Total	M _{tv}	M _p	M _r	M _o	Total
A	4	2	1	3	10	9	6	1	4	20
B	8	7	1	8	24	7	11	1	4	23
C	2	6	1	7	16	8	2	-	6	16
D	2	1	6	4	13	10	1	2	7	20
E	-	-	1	3	4	4	3	1	2	10
F	-	1	1	3	5	5	2	-	2	9
G	1	-	1	1	3	2	12	3	2	21
H	-	1	1	1	3	8	1	-	3	12
I	2	2	-	2	6	2	6	5	4	17

Totals

19	20	13	32	84	55	44	13	34	148
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Interpersonal Sources: 84

Media Sources: 148

This is where the introduction of context becomes important. The use of a qualitative data collection method captured some measure of the collaborator's context. This context can be related to see *how* the collaborators talked about their information themes.

The discussion of the way the collaborators talked about their different sources of information will be related through three frames of analysis. We will look at how they talked about television information and interpersonal information. We will examine how the collaborators talked about certain issues in the campaign. And finally, their explanations of how their feelings changed over the course of the campaign will be presented.

In all three frames, we will see if any patterns are evident in the information gathered.

Themes in Information Source Citation.

The information references of the collaborators occurred in a very complex environment that was difficult for the researcher to understand. Some collaborators viewed the election in very simple terms that reflected circumstances specific to their situation, while others were much more

complex in their views. It was not easy to discover patterns that rose above simple idiosyncratic explanations.

There was no "either-or" when it came to media or interpersonal themes of information. Often, the references to both were intertwined. In many cases, information was not attributed to any source by the collaborators, even when the researcher asked where the information had come from.

However, it was possible from the limited insight the researcher gained into the way the collaborators talked about the election to identify broad themes that emerged from their answers.

Television and Interpersonal Contact

From the aggregate matrix, we know that collaborators mentioned media sources of information more than interpersonal ones. Specifically, they mentioned television more frequently than any other source of information. The way collaborators talked *about* television, however, differed markedly from how they talked about interpersonal contacts. This is especially evident when contrasted with encounters the collaborators had with candidates or their volunteers.

References to television tended to be general. Collaborators tended to talk about TV information in brief terms, mentioning it in passing and

proceeding to talk about other issues. They rarely specified what program or network they had obtained the information from.

Collaborator E, in the tentative tone that characterized all her interviews, talked about a forum on job creation she had seen when asked by the researcher if she had learned anything new about the campaign:

Yes, I did learn a little bit more. The Progressive Conservative's platform...I think she announced in more detail...She was talking more about what they were going to offer Canadians. I did watch a little bit *on one of the news shows' forums* on job creation...I didn't get too much from that...That's important to me...(It's) a concern because I am currently unemployed.(researcher's emphasis)

She then went on to talk in general terms about how she was not really sure about what issues concerned her, echoing her overall uncertainty about whether she was getting enough information.

Early in the campaign, Collaborator A said she found the general tone of the media coverage to be negative. She mentioned that she had seen unspecified "mud slinging" on the news, and then continued to give her general evaluation of it.

Well... I think now we're getting...down and dirty. It was interesting last night I was *watching the news* and all of them are coming out now...mud slinging...I don't necessarily like (it) but I think we have to take people to task when they make gross statements or statements that are not backed up by... good information. So I see that beginning to emerge. And I think the other thing that's becoming (important) at least from the media side is that the polls are certainly looking like

the Reform Party or the fringe parties...are gaining momentum. And I think that is...scaring or at least making the other regular mainstream parties re-think "Should we be doing something different?" So I think that's where I've sort of been in the last week. (researcher's emphasis)

This corresponded with the belief she stated in cluster that Kim Campbell was treated unfairly by the media, as well as the fear that ran through her interviews that Preston Manning and the Reform Party might usurp the Conservatives.

Collaborator C said jokingly that she hoped that the PCs didn't "have a prayer", but went on to say she had "seen" that they might join forces with the New Democratic Party after a Liberal victory. She was asked by the researcher where she had obtained that information.

(T)hat they're going to team up? On *a program* from Toronto this morning...yep...I think McLaughlin is going to do better than the polls are saying. They've got her dead last and I think that's a little bit much. I mean everybody doesn't live in Ontario and just 'cause everybody in Ontario hates Bob Rae this week doesn't mean that everybody across the country does...You know...she's running last. Even after the Reform Party...hold on I got to turn off my pasta maker. (researcher's emphasis)

Her attempt to differentiate the federal and provincial NDP was characteristic of the balanced perspective she brought to her view of the election.

Collaborator H railed against the insincerity of all politicians, and in doing so briefly mentioned the PC deficit reduction plan. The researcher picked up on this, and asked him where the information on the plan had come from.

Deficit is gone in 5 years, promise! How can you possibly get away with saying something like that?

Interviewer: Where did you find out about that?

I seen this on the tv. Clips on tv. More so than anything I think I get more of my political information from television than anywhere else. I don't subscribe to a newspaper here and I used to read it at work, but I don't have time at work any more. (researcher's emphasis)

He then resumed his cynical evaluation of the quality of political leadership, reflecting his general dissatisfaction with the election and his overall pessimistic view of the world.

The collaborators were a little more specific when they talked about how they had seen national party leaders on television. When they spoke about party commercials and the appearance of the leaders on TV, collaborators tended to focus on superficial factors such as the candidates' appearance and not on party policies or issues. The only exceptions were their treatment of the leaders' debate and Chretien ads issue, and these will be addressed in a subsequent analysis.

Late in the campaign, Collaborator A was trying to cope with the potential defeat of the PC government. She said she found that Kim Campbell "looked desperate in the media", echoing her growing disappointment with the decline of Conservative fortunes. She quickly went on to say how angry the Reform leader made her.

And Preston Manning, like, I think when I think of him I go crazy, but I notice in the last week *when he's been on TV* or anything that he seems to have this smirk on his face all the time. He's done what he wanted to do, and he's shaken things up and he's going to get some of the things that he wants and I think he's feeling really high. (researcher's emphasis)

She appeared to view Manning was a right-wing spoiler who was gloating over the predicament of the Conservatives.

Collaborator F was asked if she had learned anything new about the election, and replied with a blunt "I don't like Chretien." Accustomed to her reluctance to speak, the researcher asked her to elaborate. She paused, and then gave a decidedly negative assessment of the Liberal leader's mannerisms and appearance.

...I don't think he speaks well. He has..every time you hear him *speak on TV* he's got that French sort of almost like a slur and...to represent a country he doesn't impress me as a strong leader who can speak well. I like Kim Campbell. I followed that (leadership) election very closely...I like Kim Campbell...she's a good speaker.(researcher's emphasis)

In a hurried telephone interview late in the day, Collaborator D said she felt the NDP commercials were too "negative" and compared them to the low-key approach of Jean Chretien.

And what they say about Jean Chartrand (sic) is true. He's old. He's not...bringing himself close to the younger generation. ***He stands there on TV*** and basically reads what he has to say. You know he's not using...anything flashy, he's being just the way it is. And I think I think the flash and all the other stuff that goes along with it is...believe it or not...going to sell. That's how I feel anyway.
(researcher's emphasis)

This followed from her earlier praise of Chretien as a no-nonsense politician and the connection he represented to her francophone culture.

Collaborator H attributed some advertisements he had seen to a particular network, and judged them in his general view of the poor quality of leadership.

I did watch some of the free time things ***they had on CBC*** tonight...I think it's interesting to point out the way they need to slag each other off instead of presenting a positive view of themselves. They'd rather spend time slagging the other people off than pumping themselves out...and that's all I saw of that...slag here, slag there...a shot here, a shot there...just...(pause) a waste of my time with all this negative information. (researcher's emphasis)

Collaborator C said she had seen some of the National Party candidates on television and evaluated them in terms of their appearance as compared to Jean Chretien.

I was really surprised...I've been *watching some of the interviews* on the National Party...This guy...you should check out what these people look like...they're the most unappealing people I think I've ever seen in my life. (laughs) I mean couldn't they get one good looking guy across Canada? They are ugly and geeky looking I'm sorry. (laughs) Anyway Chretien doesn't look so bad anyway. (researcher's emphasis)

This reflected the balanced yet humorous perspective she brought to the election. While she chose to talk about the appearance of specific politicians, she recognized that Chretien was not the only unattractive candidate.

When asked in one interview if she had noticed anything new about the campaign in the last week, the only thing that Collaborator D could remember was that she had seen some Conservative ads featuring Kim Campbell. She mentioned them only briefly and did not go into any great detail.

No..I've seen a couple of Campbell's campaign ads..She looks really good on her campaign ads...Whoever's doing them with her is really media-oriented.

Other commercials which collaborators mentioned were those of the Natural Law Party. Their promises to eliminate the national debt and to bring "peace and harmony" to Canada through transcendental meditation elicited this cynical reaction from Collaborator G.

They've got this cartoon character of Doug Henning as a spokesperson. How could they ever ever think this person would be considered serious? You know? Have you seen the ads yet?

Interviewer: What ads? For the Natural Law Party?

Yeah.. "Oh..(animated voice)...I've made elephants disappear...and I'll make your deficit disappear." And it's like my God...this is unbelievable!! You know they show the elephant disappearing and you know...it's bad. It's funny...I'm so glad they're there, though. It's like the Canadian Ross Perot, only you know..I really like Ross Perot..I thought he was great. But this is really comical...it's really embarrassing that this is happening.

While he found the ads embarrassing, he seemed to evaluate them solely for their oddity and entertainment value, fitting with his overall approach to the campaign.

How the collaborators talked about information they got from television shows an interesting trend. While the tone of many of the attributions was specific to different collaborators (e.g. Collaborator H was cynical, Collaborator A was disappointed in Kim Campbell), they showed a common trend in the *way* they referenced information to television. They tended to talk about television in broad, unspecific terms. They spoke about a "program" they had seen, or "the news the other night" but did not go into any greater detail about what they had obtained from what they were viewing.

When they did mention details about television coverage, notably in the case of seeing the leaders or their commercials, the collaborators concentrated on superficial factors like their appearance, speaking voice or mannerisms.

This is in marked contrast to how they related information they had gained through some forms of interpersonal contact. Particularly, the collaborators placed a great deal of importance on encounters they had with volunteers for the local riding candidates or the candidates themselves.

In her first interview, it was obvious that Collaborator C did not have a high opinion of Shaughnessy Cohen. It came out in the conversation that she remembered an encounter she had with her some time before the election. The experience left a strong impression on her, and allowed her to comment on what she perceived to be Cohen's character flaws.

Shaughnessy Cohen whom I know and I'll give you an i.e.: This was about four or five years ago when they were running for leader in this division...The subject came up of abortion. There was a man (at the meeting) who was totally anti-abortion, which was his right, and Shaughnessy didn't say anything. So afterwards I said to her "Shaughnessy...why didn't you say anything?" I said "you realize that 50% of the voters are women and you have to stand up for women and their right to do whatever they want to do for themselves." She was too busy being a politician and that upset me.

Collaborator C also expressed an implied dislike for Tom Porter. She attributed it to an encounter the PC candidate had with her parents.

Tom Porter I do not like...I've known Tom, but on a local issue...My parents' house is...in one of the oldest parts of the city. They were doing something about changing the building codes...and when my parents opposed it, they, of course, called Tom Porter, because that was his riding. He was extremely rude to my parents...So I think that if this person is so cool about other people's feelings then I can't see how he can represent other people.

Often such feelings were implied by collaborators and only came to the surface with repeated questioning. As the researcher got to know Collaborator A, a strong dislike of Howard McCurdy was evident from her comments. When she was asked to explain why she felt this way, however, she replied in generalities. Finally, in the last telephone interview, she gave an explanation in the midst of a larger discussion on the state of affairs in the riding. She had once had a rather unpleasant encounter with him in her capacity as a community service worker.

I think (McCurdy's) trying desperately to go out with grace, but I *know* he doesn't have a lot of grace or class. I've seen him really angry and he has taken some strips out of my back on occasion...(At a specific event) he came here and proceeded to yell and scream. I have never seen such an outrage. He continued to yell and scream at me and I asked him to leave. And that was the beginning of the end for me. I mean I still say hi to him and I'm sure he has forgotten all about it or maybe that's the way he treats people, but not me. So I don't have a lot of respect for him any more. (collaborator's emphasis)

She related the specifics of this incident in greater detail, and it was evident from the tone of her description that she felt that she had been horribly wronged by McCurdy. This experience coloured her personal feelings toward McCurdy specifically and the NDP in general.

Like Collaborator C, she based her opinion of Tom Porter on personal encounters with him, but in her case she held him in high regard. While this could have been attributed to her right-wing political views, she said that her job had brought her into contact with Porter in his role as a city councillor. She went on to comment that his voting record had been "consistent", and that she admired his personal qualities of "loyalty" and "determination."

Collaborator B also had a favourable view of Porter. She attended luncheon meetings held by a community service organization, part of what she called her "professional networking." Porter had been a guest speaker at one of these meetings. She said that she was impressed by what he said, as it mirrored her own concerns about the decline of the Ontario economy.

I listened to Tom Porter yesterday and he said "Do you really really think that Ontario is any better now than under the Conservatives way back when?" And it's true. When we had a Conservative government Ontario had a four-star rating worldwide. Now, times have changed. It's hardly fair to say that they could have kept it up but I think we would have been in better shape if we could have kept the Conservatives in the Ontario government.

She went on to say that the message had been well-received by the members of the audience, and that she had discussed it with a few of them later.

...I think there were a lot of Conservatives in the audience. In a couple of cases there were a couple of NDP people that I happened to know there. They were kind of newcomers. And one of them said to me "I was afraid to question him for fear that I'd lose it and start getting angry." Well, don't try to tell me that you're going to blame everything on them. It started before them.

Collaborator B's view of the NDP, and in particular the riding candidate, was also favourable. She knew Howard McCurdy socially and compared his speech at a similar luncheon to an experience she had with him at a party.

...I got to hear him speak and he is without a word of a lie a wonder to watch. He starts so back and so dignified and he gradually winds up. And of course I'm sitting there and I realize at a party I've seen him do the Black gospel minister and it's really funny...It's only (slightly removed) from where he is .. (laughs) Now I can't agree with everything that he says...my leanings because of the business are more right wing, but on the other hand I don't know what we would do if we didn't have dedicated people like him with those points of view in Parliament.

Almost all participants in the study were contacted by volunteers working for a major party, and the collaborators went into a large degree of

detail explaining such encounters. Collaborator D related this experience she had with a PC canvasser:

Well Tom Porter...a girl called for Tom Porter and I thought...gosh, lady, you should do a better job. (laughs) 'Cause she called and she said "Yes I'm calling ...I'm calling for Tom Porter...and bye bye." And I said "what party is he for?" And she said "Progressive Conservative - PC." I said "What's that girl? That's that Kim Campbell girl?" And she said "yeah." And I said "I don't think I'm gonna be voting for him." And she said "Okay...thank-you, bye." (laughs)

Interviewer: Really?

And I was like going...obviously you're not into changing people's minds. And that was it.

Collaborator D also spent a lot of time talking about Greg Novini, the Reform Party candidate. In one interview she revealed that she knew him personally and poked fun at him for "stretching his qualifications" in his campaign literature.

Greg Novini is running for the Reform Party and I went to university with him. So I thought it was pretty funny. I like the guy. He's a nice guy but I mean, he put in his pamphlet for the Reform Party that...he manages his own electronic business. Now I know the guy and personally his "electronic business" is that he does Karaoke in bars. (laughs) I'm sitting looking at this saying "own electronic business?" Cool wording. And I was thinking I wonder how many other people are wording themselves to make themselves look really good and really don't know too much...So I'm wondering how many other people are pushing their skills and whatnot and basically BS-ing. I think *I'll* run next year.

Her prior contact with Novini allowed her to evaluate the campaign literature from a totally different viewpoint. She later called Novini's office and spoke with him personally, and talked about it in passing during a later interview and again in the wrap-up interview.

In an uncharacteristically enthusiastic exchange, Collaborator F immediately brought up a face-to-face meeting she had with one of the candidates.

Interviewer: How about the people in your riding? Did any of them do anything that caught your attention?

Howard McCurdy came to my door!

Interviewer: Oh really?

Yes! On Monday and introduced himself. Wanted me to vote for him. But I couldn't ask him any questions....he kept saying...he kept talking about the NAFTA...and I mentioned something about it and he'd say "oh no no no" and I hope you vote for me. But he wasn't open to answering any questions, but he wanted me to vote for him.

She was pleased that a candidate had visited her, but seemed happy that she could point to a concrete example of why she did not like the NDP.

The experience of Collaborator H showed the impact that one encounter with a candidate could have. Throughout the campaign, his perception of politics was decidedly cynical. He talked about the lack of "quality leadership" choices and how politicians were "all the same."

Midway through the campaign, he complained that the local candidates were "invisible" to him.

In the wrap-up interview, however, he was glowing in his praise of Shaughnessy Cohen. She had come by his house and they "chatted on the front porch." He said that a former co-worker "...sold me on Cohen...he was really impressed." Overall, Collaborator H said that her "sincerity was the deciding factor." "There's very little in the media that relays sincerity," he said, "...I'm very distrustful of politicians and her sincerity did it for me."

The impact that this encounter had was very different from the negative pronouncements he had made throughout the campaign, pronouncements on information that he attributed, for the most part, to television.

Summary - Television and Interpersonal Contact

As noted in Figure 4-9, media sources of information were mentioned more than interpersonal ones. In particular, the collaborators mentioned television more than any other source of information. The way in which they mentioned television, however, differed markedly from the way they referenced some interpersonal information.

When the collaborators mentioned television, they tended to do so in general terms. They spoke of "a program they had seen", for example, but

did not go into any detail about what that program had contained. Their references became slightly more specific when they talked about seeing the leader on the news or in a commercial. Even in those cases, the collaborators tended to talk about the leaders in terms of their appearance or mannerisms.

When they talked about direct contact they may have had with a local candidate, however, their references became very detailed. In many cases the collaborators had positive or negative experiences with the candidates that occurred years previously, and they were judging them based on these encounters. The impact of many of these single cases of interpersonal contact could not even begin to be compared to the offhand way the collaborators talked about most television information.

The Interrelationship of Sources

This analysis section will look at how the collaborators related their information sources in two of the campaign events they talked about most often. Specifically, it will take the citations of the leaders' debates and the Chretien ads controversy and attempt to see if there are any common

patterns in how the members of the study group referenced their information.

The attributions of collaborators did not generally occur in separate, definable chunks. Their statements did not usually say "I saw X on television and heard Y from my cousin Bob." The collaborators' perceptions of the campaign, as noted previously, were a muddle of feelings and impressions peppered with information they attributed to definite sources.

How they talked about certain issues that were popular in the media, however, offers another vantage point from which to look at *how* the collaborators used information. By looking how the collaborators talked about certain issues, it may be possible to find common themes in the way they related information.

An Atypical Collaborator

Most collaborators talked in general terms about the campaign, balancing information from many sources with that drawn from their own experience. They did not tend to focus on one single reference or event and say "that is what did it for me." Collaborator D was atypical in that respect, and her situation deserves mention if only for its unique nature in the study.

As we noted in her introduction, Collaborator D lived a very traditional life based on her family, children and religion. She was the only collaborator who mentioned attending church, and in that reference she said her priest had told people it was their duty to vote. In other references, including her cluster and forcefield, she talked about the abortion issue and its relevance to the election.

It was not until the final stages of the wrap-up interview that the researcher gained a true insight into her decision-making process. When the formal interviewing ended, she began chatting in general terms about the election. After some general comments, she said "I'll show you how I made up my mind. It was in this paper!"

She placed a copy of a pro-life newspaper on the table and said "That's what did it." She had received the paper in church on the Sunday before the election. In an insert, it listed the local riding candidates and their stands on abortion. She said she had just looked up her riding, found out which candidates were pro-life, and made her choice based on that information.

This is interesting from a number of perspectives. Firstly, it was atypical in the study in that no other collaborator mentioned such a single-issue orientation. Yet, what differentiated Collaborator D from the rest of the study group was that she lived a very traditional lifestyle centred

around her family and the church. Raising three small children left her little time to consider broadening her information choices, and she may have looked for a decision-making "shortcut" to make the choice easier.

This was not the typical experience of the collaborators, however. A surprising number of information sources were cited by most collaborators, especially in respect to the two major media issues of the campaign.

Intertwined Information

During their interviews the collaborators generally did not talk about national issues that received extensive media coverage. Some collaborators mentioned one or two media issues, while others mentioned more. There were two issues, however, that were mentioned by almost all collaborators - the leaders' debate and the "Chretien ads" controversy (see Figure 4-10).

Two leaders' debates were held on prime-time Canadian television, one in French on October 3 and one in English the following day. Because of their adversarial nature, the debates were covered extensively in the media, and were mentioned by almost all collaborators.

Knowledge of the Chretien ads issue was less widespread, but still considerable. Towards the end of the election campaign, the Progressive Conservatives aired two negative advertisements that were very critical of

Jean Chretien. They showed unflattering freeze-frames of his face with voice-overs of negative personal comments.

Figure 4-10: Issues Mentioned by Most Collaborators

Issues	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	
TV Debates	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		8
Negative anti-Chretien ads	X		X		X	X	X		X	6

The ads were criticized by the media and even members of the PC Party, and were immediately ordered to be taken off the air by Kim Campbell. The issue became, in the views of many political analysts, the event that sealed the Liberal's election win.

Both issues were mentioned in a considerable amount of detail by collaborators. As they were mentioned by most participants in the study group, they offer an opportunity to look at how many different collaborators looked at the same issue. If we look at how they talked about these two issues, there is the possibility that broad trends may be visible in how they evaluated both events.

The Debate

The televised leaders' debates took up a large portion of prime time Canadian television. Their confrontational nature ensured that they received a great deal of news coverage from both television and other media. This probably made the collaborators more aware of the debates than they were of other events, and the way they talked about them demonstrates how different sources of information interacted with one another.

Collaborator C was disappointed by the quality of the national candidates. She said that she was "discouraged" and jokingly added "I think we should get rid of them all and start again." When asked by the researcher why she felt this way, she talked about the debate in terms of a newspaper article she had read.

...Well, I think it was just the debate and you know it just doesn't seem to be...and I also thought that (it was) arrogant maybe. I don't know who wrote this in The (Windsor) Star but they said that the Liberals were a shoe-in...I don't think that anybody should think that anybody is a shoe-in right now. Just my opinion.

She was asked by the researcher if she had actually watched the debate. She said she hadn't, but went on to talk about how she had seen reports about the debate on television and had talked to her friends about it.

No (I didn't see it), but I read about it. I saw some reruns of it and of course the media's jumping on everybody...I think I'm beginning to

lose interest in it, that's the sad part. Me and a bunch of other people don't think that (the politicians) know what they're doing....(The other people) don't understand what's going on either...(laughs) Well they understand, but blaming everybody for the recession is getting really boring because people are really smarter than that.

In mentioning one event - the debate - Collaborator C brought three other sources of information into her evaluation. She mentioned she had read something about it in the Windsor Star, that she had seen "reruns of it" in the media, and had talked about it with "other people."

Collaborator E brought in a comparable number of information sources when she mentioned the debate. While she was tentative at first, in keeping with the nature of her other comments, she said that she had actually watched the original broadcast of the debate. She proceeded to comment on its argumentative nature.

...Actually I got to see the debate, not on the Sunday night, but I believe it was the Monday night?...There was a lot of good issues but there was a lot of bickering, it was quite a lively debate, needless to say. I guess it did help me though to realize more what people were talking about...I still would have liked to see it on more of a constructive basis than more of an argument type situation...I found that there was a lot of arguing back and forth about certain issues and I know that the commentator had to break up certain things to get them moving on. But I thought that it was good that at least they were discussing the important issues...I thought that it was a good idea.

She then linked the debate to news coverage she had seen of Preston Manning.

Well...I think it was with that debate...I've been watching the news and stuff and...I've been watching (Preston Manning) and they'll say he's in Calgary or whatever and speaking to students...I find myself listening more to what he had to say and understanding a little more about what his party stands for.

She talked about Manning very briefly and then revealed that she had spoken in some detail about the debate with the regular group of people she met in her physiotherapist's waiting room.

But people in general (have talked about the debate)...I'm having physiotherapy and I noticed that on Monday there was a discussion about the (debate) and today there was another discussion about it. A lot of people felt the same way I did...It was good that they did have the forum, but that the commentator had to go back to them and try to keep them on track when they were going off on a tangent and taking things personally...None of us kind of liked that very well. We felt that the Liberals and Conservatives were falling a little more than previously...

Collaborator E had thus watched the debate on television, talked about it in terms of the media coverage she had seen of Preston Manning, and discussed it in some detail with a group of people.

Collaborator D, probably due to the demands of her traditional lifestyle, was usually more general than the other collaborators when talking about the election. When she talked about the debate, however, she

brought in a decidedly unexpected range of information references. She first mentioned that she had caught part of the original broadcast, and had seen subsequent reports about the debate in the media.

I watched...I missed most of (the debate) because I was in the bathtub...I did catch the aftershocks from the media so I thought it was pretty bad. Pretty bad. I'm looking at these people who are leaders, who are trying to be leaders of our country, and they're bickering like little kids...I don't like Kim Campbell because she's backstabbing, she's using the techniques that aren't very nice at all.

She went on to discuss the "childish" behaviour of the candidates, behaviour she was no doubt accustomed to on a daily basis. She then talked about accusations that Campbell was levying against Chretien in the debate that the collaborator knew were "false" from other media reports. In the course of relating this, she brought in a totally unexpected information source.

She's attacking and accusing and she's saying false things like when she yelled at Chretien for...not even recognizing that there's a problem with the deficit. And I found out (it was false) from the media, mind you, because if the media (hadn't) ...pointed it out that in (Chretien's plan) he does say stuff about the deficit...But I read this paper. I don't know who dropped it off or whatnot but it's a got something to do with religion and the apocalypse and 666 and all that stuff.

She proceeded to talk about a pamphlet that someone had left in her mailbox. It talked about the approaching end of the world and how one could avoid paying taxes until it happened.

...And it gets into (how) Canada's federal income tax is unconstitutional and it tells you exactly why...It goes into the 1867 BNA act and it gets into the Canada Act...It gets into how this guy didn't pay taxes for years and that (a)...judge told the income tax people if they took this guy to court one more time he'd be charging them for harassment...But I thought that was really neat that all these people (in government)...are doing something illegal.....I thought that was pretty wild and I'd actually like to look into that and find out if it is illegal and, if it is, why is the government doing something that is illegal?

From this, she went back to talking about the debate using more "traditional" sources of information. She had seen a news report that had evaluated the leaders' performances using hand-held "people meters."

I don't know what it's called....but they've got people with the little hand computers and stuff. Have you seen it? So I've been watching a lot of that.

Collaborator D thus brought in four distinct sources of information. She saw part of the original broadcast of the debate and the subsequent media stories about it. She proceeded to evaluate it, in part, by talking about an "apocalyptic" pamphlet she had received. Finally, she mentioned a news story that evaluated the leaders' performances.

Collaborator H also talked about the debate in a different way. While he attributed his information to more traditional sources, the way in which he talked about the debate showed some interesting connections. He began with his traditional theme that politicians were insincere and ineffective, and moved on to talk about the debate in a similar vein.

Another thing that bugs me about election time is this phrase that these politicians use constantly..."La la la la la...best for the taxpayers", although you never hear this any other time of the year. It's just election time when they're your best friend....But you know the debate was...interesting but totally ineffective. Just a real waste of time...I think in general those debates are - both the American campaigns and the Canadian ones...And I thought that this one...especially the English one was just ridiculous. Just a bunch of yelling...that's kind of the way I see it..

From this general evaluation, however, he went on to immediately talk about the National Law Party being investigated as a form of "cult."

I thought the (parties) picked up on some really negative press. This cult thing I think was probably dug out by the other parties possibly, possibly not...But now they're connecting them to the cults...

Interviewer: I haven't followed that story..

It's recent. Very recent...I read about it today. Some Swedish cult investigative agency is now saying that (The Natural Law Party) are suspicious...because of where they have received their financial backing over the years.

He thus chose to relate his perceptions of the debate to an investigation of the Natural Law party that he had read about in the paper. This was original, but probably reflected his concentration on entertainment and novelty aspects of the campaign.

Collaborator A took a decidedly more pragmatic, though no less original view of the debate. She had watched it and the subsequent media reports, and in doing so wondered whether her perceptions of the debate had been correct. When she compared her views of the debate to what she saw reported in the media, she found they did not agree. Although she attributed the difference in opinion to a bias in the media, this discrepancy prompted her to read unspecified material to get some more information.

...My perception of what happened during the debates certainly was very different from what was reported in the media. And I'm like...boy...am I nuts, or off-whack, or what? So I'm sort of looking at what's happening. Am I really perceiving things as I should be? So I've been trying to do some more reading but I think to myself that it doesn't really change anything. The media reports whatever party they're sort of engulfed with or siding with...That's where their reporting's coming from and maybe I shouldn't be putting so much weight into what comes out in the media. It's like people...you know the economic people and after the debate they see things the way they see things and it's not the way that I see things, well, too bad (laughs)..But it was interesting because I sort of sat there and thought, gee am I nuts? I didn't perceive some of that stuff at all.

She went on to talk about how the argumentative nature of the debate had allowed Preston Manning - a person for whom she had expressed a repeated dislike - to gain ground.

...I really didn't like the personal yelling and screaming. I guess that was really unprofessional...It really lowers them to a level of when people don't want to listen to that...I think what it did was it made Preston Manning look good which just infuriates me...When it came out in the papers it was "he was the winner!" Like "excuse me?" ...I think what part of that whole yelling and screaming back and forth at each other was that you allow somebody like him to remain very calm and then sort of take on the role of the moderator...He comes across like "see...they're idiots and I'm the rational down to earth common sense person who's going to lead the country back to whatever" and I think "boy that's pretty scary." But it's also, on his part, very manipulative and very smart.

She was obviously very angry about the failure of the media to support Kim Campbell, and upset at the fact that Manning might have gained at Campbell's expense. In talking about this, however, she mentioned three other sources of information. She talked about seeing the debate on television, watching media reports about it, and reading in the papers that Manning was the winner. She also admitted to doing some unspecified additional reading to understand why her view was so different than what she saw in the media.

The debate was an issue that most collaborators were aware of and discussed. When they did talk about it, many of their assessments were

similar. They talked about the argumentative nature of the forum and the behaviour of the candidates, and many such opinions were rooted in their overall views of the campaign.

In making such evaluations, however, the collaborators brought in many different sources of information to talk about one event. While their comments were not detailed enough to determine whether one source of information was more important than another, the way they talked about the debate showed how they viewed an issue that was essentially reported on television through many different sources of information.

The Chretien Ads Issue

The controversy surrounding the negative advertisements attacking the Liberal leader were mentioned by many members of the study group. Much like the references to the debate, the pattern which emerged from the way collaborators talked about it was quite interesting.

Collaborator A was dismayed by how the issue made Campbell "look bad", and that the timing of the issue was probably due to the "desperation" of the PC camp.

I look at Campbell and the whole thing that they did on his physical affliction and I thought "you don't do this two weeks (from) the end of the campaign.".. I think she's just so desperate and people are just

like "this will work". I think she's allowing other people to do things instead of keeping on top of it and that made me go "oh my God."

The researcher asked her if she had seen the ads when they were broadcast. Her reply was interesting in that it showed she remembered the ad as not being as severe as the media portrayed it. She subsequently brought in interpersonal sources of information to put the issue in perspective.

...I saw (the ad) and then...oh no...let me...I didn't see them...It was on the news at night...They kept freezing the frame and showing how his mouth quirks or whatever...That's when I sort of turned it off and I thought "I can't watch any more of this"... I guess when I looked at it I thought maybe I missed something. I mean it didn't seem to say "would you vote for somebody with this sort of affliction?" I didn't hear that. And I said to Wally...my husband "Did you see them? They don't (seem too bad)" He said "I didn't see them so I don't know what...they said."

In the same stream of thought, she mentioned that she felt limited by her choice of media, and that this had motivated her to seek additional sources of information.

...I didn't see the ads per se...So unfortunately I'm stuck with what the media wants you to see at eleven, that's what I end up seeing. Except that I do try to read the Globe.... Actually a friend of mine gets the London Free Press so she's been saving me stuff and I've been reading that and that's a whole other perspective. I actually said to my son "I might buy that" because it's very different. It gives a whole different perspective than we have.

Collaborator A first chose to evaluate the ad in terms of her leaning towards the Conservatives. This motivated her to ask her husband if he agreed with the media's characterization of the ads, and then she moved on to a discussion of how her media information might be deficient. In doing so, she mentioned both her son, a friend, and two different newspapers. Thus in the general conversation prompted by the ads issue, Collaborator A brought in a large number of different sources of information, largely dictated by her personal view towards the parties involved.

Collaborator C also followed an intricate path of attribution when she talked about the Chretien ads issue. She praised the Liberal leader for his handling of the attack and then went on to bring in different interpersonal sources of information. In doing so, she mused that the way "people talked" about Campbell might be related to a sexist bias.

...Chretien I think did *wonderfully*. And Kim...the barrage of criticism she's getting across the board...I wonder if deep down there's a bias because she's a woman. I mean in a sense I think she took on a bigger role than she was ready to handle, but at the same time it really feels chauvinistic some of the remarks I hear...(other people make). (collaborator's emphasis)

She added that she had been "talking to a friend" and that she had told her "I'm sure (Campbell) didn't even see these ads..." She then went on

to say that some acquaintances of hers "needed to be straightened out" when it came to their sexist views of Campbell related to the ads issue.

Collaborator B viewed the ads issue through her sensitivity to a possible sexist bias against Kim Campbell. In relating how she felt about the relation of sexism to the issue, she mentioned two interpersonal contacts.

In relating his perceptions of the ads issue, Collaborator G also mentioned interpersonal contact. While he stuck to his pattern of recounting information he read in the Windsor Star, he related what the paper had said about the issue to Chretien's visit to Windsor and his daughter's small part in it.

Chretien came to town. And it was fairly well supported I guess. And on the national (front), the PC controversy over their campaign ad about Jean Chretien...I guess that received a fairly poor response I think from the populace.

Interviewer: Did you see the ad yourself?

No...I didn't actually see the ad..I would have liked to see the ad...but I read it in the newspaper and I think it turned away a lot of people...I didn't (go to see Chretien when he was here). But my daughter did. She's involved in the campaign. (proudly) And she shook hands with Mrs. Chretien.

Collaborator I also stepped out of character when she talked about the ads. She began by mentioning the severity of the Conservative's attack, and then brought in other people's opinions.

The Tories are pretty cruel people...they just *attacked* Chretien. But to Chretien's credit, he didn't come back and slam them for what they did. He just stood back and let it happen...His advisors are advising him well, because he just sat back and explained that the way he talks is a childhood...problem. ...He's just going to sit back and let it happen...And everyone now seems to be conceding that the Liberals will form a majority government.

Interviewer: Do you mean the other leaders or people you talk to?

...Mostly people I talk to...(They) definitely aren't going to vote for Kim Campbell. Most of the people I'm around have been deeply affected by the social contract so they're not voting NDP and the next way to go for them is Jean Chretien. (collaborator's emphasis)

When the researcher asked her if she had actually watched the commercials, she admitted that she hadn't, but proceeded to talk about them in the context of *other* commercials she had seen and a radio show she had heard the negative ads mentioned on.

I didn't actually see the commercials. No I didn't. But I've seen some of the PC commercials where they're talking about Jean Chretien and you know his beliefs and things like that and that's fine. But when they start commenting on how he looks...Although somebody made a really interesting comment the other day...I was listening to the radio...and somebody made a really interesting comment on a call-in show. (They said) that the Windsor Star slammed the Tory government for making fun of the way Jean Chretien looks, yet in their editorial cartoons they always depict people totally

uncharacteristic of what they look like. I mean they blow up noses and have big ears and everything else and that's o-k... But if somebody actually does something like (the Conservative's are) doing they get slammed for it. I thought that was a really interesting comment.

Collaborator I, who had a professedly high level of media literacy, had not seen the commercials, but instead talked about them in terms of what other people said and a radio call-in show she had heard.

Most collaborators were aware of the ads, but, like Collaborator I, many had not seen them on television. Instead, they cited a variety of information sources that mixed media sources with the opinions of others. Collaborators often evaluated the ads based on personal factors which were specific to them, but the way they talked about the ads showed how they brought in many different - and often atypical - sources of information to talk about a mainly media event.

Summary - The Intertwining of Information Sources

The leaders' debate and the Chretien ads controversy were two issues that were mentioned by most collaborators. While both issues were primarily reported in the media, when the collaborators talked about them they referenced information to a wide variety of sources. They did not tend,

for example, to rely on television alone for information about the debate, but attributed information about it to a number of divergent sources.

Many of these sources were what one could expect, such as newspaper commentaries, discussions with co-workers. Others were totally unexpected - like Collaborator D's discussion of an apocalyptic pamphlet, Collaborator G's focusing on the Natural Law party, or Collaborator F's daughter meeting Jean Chretien.

Barometer Trends

The barometer forms completed by the collaborators (see example, Appendix Two) were rough measures of how their feelings changed over the course of the campaign. The resultant graphs did not represent detailed measures of opinion change, but were intended to capture broad trends that may have occurred in the collaborators feelings towards national figures, parties or local candidates.

This represented a quasi-quantitative add-on to the adapted collaborative method. The process of asking the collaborators to explain their trends, however, allowed them to include whatever details they wished or talk about their feelings towards one candidate or many. And when the

collaborators explained their graph trends in the wrap up interview, their reflections allowed them to look back at their experiences over the course of the campaign and isolate events or issues that may have been important to them.

The collaborators' explanations of their barometer graph trends usually took the form of attributing information within the broad themes of media or interpersonal sources. As such, the information gathered from the explanations offers another viewpoint from which to approach how the collaborators viewed the election. It may be possible to identify different themes in their explanations which may have a bearing on the other two frames of analysis.

The collaborators completed barometer forms immediately after each weekly telephone interview. The forms asked them to give the level of their feelings on three different aspects of the election, namely: 1) individual party performance; 2) national political leaders; and 3) candidates in their riding.

The information on the views gathered weekly from each collaborator was drawn on three simple line charts. These charts (see example in Appendix Two) were then presented to the collaborators in the final wrap-up interview and they were asked to explain the most obvious trend in each.

If they said that a specific event caused their feelings to change, the collaborators were asked to discuss where that information came from.

In most cases, there was at least one large movement in their feelings over the period of study. Some collaborators, however, were asked to explain why their opinions remained fairly constant over time.

The process was short and to the point. They were presented with the trend and an open-ended question in the form of "what do you think was happening here?" Their subsequent explanations of where they got their information were uniformly brief, consisting of a few short sentences. Generally they said "Oh...it was because of issue X." These explanations will be discussed in conjunction with the presentation of the trends in three matrices, one for each of the barometer categories.

Most collaborators could remember what they were feeling at different points during the campaign and attribute their opinion shifts to a specific piece of information. The only exceptions were Collaborators F and G.

Collaborator F was tentative during parts of the interview process, and her barometer readings were not extensive. She did not begin her observations until October 6, and she could not explain the limited trends that were evident from the graphs following that point. Where she did offer explanations, they have been included in the matrix.

Collaborator G completed all of the barometer forms, but his opinions did not really change from week to week. When he was asked to explain this he was hesitant, and could only offer an explanation for one of the three graphs. His responses, where given, were noted.

The remainder of the collaborators could attribute changes in opinion to a specific source of information, and these explanations are represented in their respective matrices.

Barometer Category One - Party Performance

When asked to explain why their opinions about the national parties changed, most collaborators gave explanations that mentioned various media themes (see Figure 4-11). Collaborator A explained a marked drop in her support for the Conservatives by saying that she was disappointed in the treatment of Kim Campbell by both the media and Conservative Party. "Charest and those other guys hung her out to dry", she said.

Collaborator B saw her support for the Reform party rise dramatically at one point. She explained this by saying that she was impressed by the answers he gave in response to a question in the Windsor Star. Collaborator C was also asked to explain a trend related to Manning, but in her case she reported how she felt about the Reform Party only infrequently. She attributed this to a combination of media and

interpersonal factors, saying that she didn't like his "semi-bigoted attitude" in the media, and that other people she knew "found him ugly."

Figure 4-11: Category One - Party Performance Trends

Coll.	Trend	Theme
A	PCs declined	Media
B	Reform went up	Media
C	Reform was mentioned Infrequently	Media and Interpersonal
D	NDP rose	Media
E	Opinions on the Bloc only began on Oct. 6	No Reason
F	Reform went down	Interpersonal
G	Reform fluctuated	No Reason
H	NDP support went up	Media
I	Liberal support up late in campaign	Media

Collaborators D and H were asked to explain the high ratings they had given the New Democratic Party. Both attributed their opinion to media factors, specifically to information they had seen about Audrey McLaughlin. Collaborator D said that the NDP leader had "...come across as sympathetic" in the debate, while Collaborator H said he had seen a positive interview with McLaughlin on television.

Collaborator I attributed a similar rise in support for the Liberals to media factors as well. Towards the end of the campaign, her opinion of the Liberals went up, and she said she "perceived a rise in support for the party" in the media.

Only Collaborator F mentioned a solely personal reason for her trend. Her opinions of the Reform Party went down markedly, and she attributed it to a friend who said "Do you know what'll happen when you vote Reform?"

Two collaborators could not explain their trends. Collaborator E only began to record her opinions on the Bloc Quebecois after the debate, but could not explain why she chose to put them in at that point. Collaborator G, meanwhile, could not explain why his opinions of the Reform Party went down, and then rose again. "I just don't recall.." he said.

Overall, each collaborator's opinion trends were different. When they explained the trends in their opinion shifts, however, most attributed the changes in their feelings to information they had obtained from the media.

Barometer Category Two - National Leaders

When the collaborators were asked to explain how their feelings changed towards the leaders of the national political parties, their answers tended to be a mixed bag of themes and attributions (Figure 4-12).

Two collaborators, F and G, did not really have an evident trend, as their feelings towards the national candidates remained fairly constant. When asked why there had been little change, they could not explain the trend. This may have been related to their nonverbal nature, as pointed out in their introduction.

Figure 4-12: Category Two - National Leaders

Coll.	Trend	Source
A	Rise in support for McLaughlin	Interpersonal
B	Rise in support for McLaughlin	Inconclusive
C	Rise in support for McLaughlin	Inconclusive
D	Campbell very low from Oct. 6 onward	Media
E	Campbell went down after Oct 6	Media
F	No real trend	No explanation
G	No real trend	No explanation
H	Support for Chretien up after Oct 6	Media
I	Support for Chretien up after Oct. 13	Media

Four collaborators attributed changes in their feelings to themes which fell under the description of "media." Collaborator D gave Kim

Campbell consistently low evaluations from October 6 onward. She explained this simply, saying "I didn't like the PC ads...." Collaborator E shared similar feelings about Campbell after October 6, but attributed it to the PC leader's television manner. "When I saw her on television, she was evading questions" she said.

Collaborators H and I shared a similar rise in support for Chretien, which both attributed to media factors. Collaborator H, in keeping with his cynical view of politics, said his feelings changed because of "the negative ad thing" and Chretien's performance in the debate. Collaborator I also mentioned media factors. Her comments echoed her earlier praise of the Liberal leader's restraint, saying she was impressed with Chretien's "classy performance" after the negative ads.

The answers of two collaborators were inconclusive. Collaborator B's support for McLaughlin went up, but she could only attribute it to the NDP leader's "personal qualities", although this may tie in with the social concerns she held as outlined in her introduction. Collaborator C was asked to explain a similar rise in support for McLaughlin, but only talked about how people in general didn't separate the national and provincial NDP.

Only one collaborator gave an answer that could be considered interpersonal in nature. Collaborator A's feelings towards McLaughlin rose over the course of the campaign - an interesting trend given her staunch

support of the Conservatives. When asked to explain this, she said that "People respected (McLaughlin) for not playing dirty pool..." and went on to briefly say she shared this opinion with someone she knew.

The explanations offered by the collaborators about how their opinions changed towards the national political leaders were not conclusive. There was no trend that favoured one broad area of information over another. Of the members of the study group that did state a definite cause for a change in their feelings, most attributed it to some form of information drawn from the media.

Barometer Category Three - Local Candidates

When the collaborators explained how their feelings changed towards the candidates in their riding, almost all mentioned a variety of reasons that fell under the broad theme of "interpersonal" information (see Figure 4-13).

Two of the collaborators had positive feelings towards Tom Porter. Collaborator A rated him consistently higher than other candidates, not surprising given her conservative inclinations and repeated positive references to Porter throughout the other interviews. When she was asked why she rated him higher than the other candidates, she gave two decidedly

interpersonal reasons, saying that she knew him personally and that "he's really good one-on-one..."

Figure 4-13: Category Three - Local Candidates

Coll.	Trend	Source
A	Porter rated higher than other candidates	Interpersonal
B	Porter went up after September 29	Interpersonal
C	Support for Cohen up at campaign's end	Interpersonal
D	Reform varied weekly	Interpersonal
E	Cohen rose above other candidates	Interpersonal and Media
F	No Trends	No explanation
G	Opinion of Porter and Cohen the same	Interpersonal
H	Porter readings only began on Oct. 13	Interpersonal
I	Support for all candidates low	Media

Collaborator B's feelings towards Porter went up dramatically after September 29. She had a simple explanation for this. That was the week he had spoken at the luncheon meeting she attended, and she was "...very impressed by him."

Collaborator H, meanwhile, only began to give his feelings towards Porter after October 13, and the ratings were low. He explained in the same cynical vein that characterized his views of the campaign by saying "I'm glad he lost." He went on to briefly say that he knew one of the students who was involved in the local "survey scandal." (for a summary of local and national issues, please see Appendix Four)

Collaborator D's feelings towards the Reform Party went up and down from week to week. When asked to explain this, she said she had been encouraged by a conversation she had with a campaign worker, but was disappointed when the information she asked for was not forthcoming.

Collaborator C was more positive in the reasons she gave for her rise in support for Cohen towards the end of the campaign. She gave an overall assessment of what people she had talked to said. "Howard (McCurdy) is a sweetheart," she said, "...but people said they were voting for the party and not the person..."

Collaborator G was asked to explain why his feelings for Porter and Shaughnessy Cohen remained the same. He restated simple facts that had been evident throughout his interviews, namely that his young daughter had volunteered for Cohen and he knew Tom Porter from his work with the City of Windsor.

Collaborator E gave a more traditional reason to explain why her feelings towards Cohen rose as the campaign progressed. She attributed it to a combination of media and interpersonal factors, saying that she received information from her in the mail and a canvasser called at her door.

Only one collaborator attributed her feelings solely to media factors. Collaborator I had rated all the candidates very low. When asked to explain this, she immediately said she had done so because of the "dirty tricks" the candidates were playing on each other that she had read about in the media.

Collaborator F had no trends in her feelings towards local candidates, probably because she viewed the exercise, much like the cluster she was asked to do, as too much like "school."

When collaborators were asked to explain why their feelings towards local candidates changed, almost all gave answers that fell under the theme of interpersonal information. Most of the interpersonal contact the collaborators talked about was with the candidates themselves or their campaign workers, and these encounters were enough to produce wide swings - both positive and negative - in the collaborator's feelings towards the candidates.

Summary - Barometer Explanations

The reasons the collaborators gave for shifts in their feelings towards national parties, leaders, and riding candidates tended to be quite brief. Their reasons generally fell into the two broad themes identified in the transcript, namely interpersonal and media sources of information. In many cases their explanations, while brief, fit within feelings they talked about in previous interviews, so the exercise acted to consolidate the researcher's understanding of these feelings.

While the reasons the collaborators gave for their individual feelings often differed considerably, there were broad themes evident in their attributions of information. The collaborators tended to cite media information when talking about how their feelings changed towards the national parties, and to a lesser extent the leaders of these parties. Interpersonal information, however, was cited by most collaborators when talking about the local candidates.

To an extent, this is the same trend that was obvious in the first analysis frame. That analysis showed that collaborators tended to mention local issues in terms of substantial encounters they had with candidates or volunteers, while they talked about national issues through the more superficial medium of television. The explanations the collaborators gave of their barometer graph trends were brief, and did not allow for the

same level of contextual feel of the other analysis frames. On the surface, however, it appears that the collaborators looked to interpersonal sources of information when evaluating local candidates and other sources when they look at national issues.

Triangulation

The adapted CIM used in this investigation could not use the triangulation methods proposed by Carney to its fullest extent. Because the majority of the information gathered on the collaborators took place over the phone, the explanation of their behaviour could not include traditional analysis based on factors such as interpersonal or situational cues. This left many of the character traits noticed by the researcher in the repeated interviews outside of the reach of the peer reviewer.

Peer Review

The researcher took the uncoded transcripts of four collaborators, selected at random, and presented them to a peer reviewer, a graduate student chosen for his knowledge of persuasion theory and information use.

The reviewer was first asked to note where the collaborators said they were getting their information and propose broad categories in which to group the references. These newly coded pages were then compared to the original pages coded by the researcher to see if there was any discrepancy about where they were getting their information and if the peer reviewer's categories matched the researcher's.

The four instances where the reviewer's interpersonal themes were only partially similar to those of the researcher were clarified when the researcher explained the need 1) to differentiate direct encounters with a candidate from those with canvassers; and 2) to have an expanded "other" category. In the two partial cases of agreement about media information, the reviewer merely identified the researcher's categories of "newspaper" and "other" as "printed material."

The reviewer was then asked to examine the sources of information he identified for the collaborators and was asked to note any common themes about their references. The peer reviewer mentioned the use of interpersonal sources to judge local candidates and reliance on the media for information on national candidates. He also mentioned that the references were often intertwined. On a basic thematic level, his observations agreed with those of the researcher.

Figure 4-14: Researcher and Peer Reviewer Categories

<u>Researcher</u>	<u>Reviewer</u>	<u>Match?</u>
Media (overall)	Media	Y
Television	Television	Y
Radio	Radio	Y
Newspapers	Printed material	Partial
Other	Printed material	Partial
Interpersonal (overall)	People	Y
Personal Knowledge	Candidates	Partial
Family	Family	Y
Friends and Co-workers	Friends	Partial
Other	Canvassers	Partial
Other	Other	Partial

The collaborators were presented with the researcher's interpretation of their experience in the form of annotated transcripts and copies of their clusters and forcefields. These items were mailed to them and they were then contacted on the phone and asked "This is what I think you said. Do you agree with my interpretation?" The collaborators talked about minor

points, such as "was I really worried about Preston Manning?", but agreed with the general analysis.

Information Use by a group of Voters

How collaborators talked about the election was very complex and did not lend itself to easy or thorough interpretation. Often, things they said about the election could be attributed to any number of sources or influences. Two broad patterns did appear from looking at the collaborator's experiences, however. They generally attributed information to one of two types of sources - media or interpersonal.

In a straight count of these references, collaborators mentioned far more media sources of information than interpersonal ones. When we looked at *how* the collaborators talked about their different information sources, however, an interesting pattern emerged.

Their comments which attributed information to television were generally quite brief. They tended to mention television in passing and move on to a general discussion of something else. Comments typically took the form of "I saw that on TV last night" or "It was on a program I saw." Collaborators were a little more specific when it came to actually seeing the

party leaders on television, either in commercials or in the news. Even though they tended to go into slightly more detail, the nature of their comments were superficial. They talked about the appearance of the candidates, for example, saying that they "looked old" or were "geeky looking."

When this was compared to how they talked about interpersonal information, a distinct difference was observed. In the instances where collaborators had come into contact with local candidates, the impact - positive or negative - that even one encounter could have was enormous. Many collaborators talked about good and bad encounters they had with candidates, some occurring years before. The effect left by these encounters coloured, in many cases, the way the collaborators looked at the entire campaign.

Another analytical frame looked at how the collaborators talked about the two issues that were mentioned by most collaborators. Looking at how collaborators talked about the leaders' debate and the Chretien ads controversy, an interesting pattern emerged. While both issues received a large amount of television coverage, the collaborators evaluated them using an intertwined series of very different sources of information. More often than not, they would mention two or three different information sources in the context of talking about one event.

The depth of the interviewing did not make it possible to evaluate the relative "impact" of one information source over another within a single reference to an issue. It was obvious, however, that some of the sources and linkages could never have been imagined by a rational researcher trying to put forward a "best guess" as to what they would say. The citation of the apocalyptic pamphlet by Collaborator D, for example, was totally outside what any researcher would consider "election information."

The third analysis frame was a quasi-quantitative addition to the adapted CIM, in which collaborators were asked to complete barometer forms and talk about them after the election. The forms recorded their feelings towards national leaders, parties, and local candidates. While their responses were not detailed, a pattern emerged from what information they attributed changes in their feelings at different levels. Most notably, they tended to use broad media references when talking about their changes towards national parties and leaders. On a local level, however, they cited specific interpersonal sources of information or encounters with people when asked to explain why their feelings changed.

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Chapter Five

Discussion of Findings

Summary of Findings

The research conducted in this study looked the information use of a small group of people during the 1993 Canadian federal election. Specifically, it examined where they said they were getting their information and how they talked about the different information sources when they related their reflections on the election campaign.

The collaborators cited two broad themes which could be categorized as media and interpersonal sources of information. A simple coding of the interview transcriptions found that collaborators mentioned the media as a source of information considerably more than interpersonal sources.

Television was by far the most often cited source of information, but an interesting contrast was evident between the way collaborators talked about television versus the information they had obtained from direct personal experience or interpersonal sources. References to television were not usually specific, as collaborators generally discussed television information in broad terms. Many references to interpersonal contact were also brief, but when collaborators had direct personal contact with a candidate or party volunteer, their relation of the information tended to be extensive.

Collaborators did not generally talk about the campaign in terms of issues which were prominent in the media. Most collaborators did mention

two media issues - the leaders' debates and the controversy over the PC ads attacking Jean Chretien. When they did discuss these issues, they referenced a broad and often surprising range of information sources. Their citations demonstrated a complexity of interaction between information sources that the limited investigative method employed in this investigation could not hope to explain.

When the collaborators talked about why their feelings towards national leaders, parties, and local candidates changed over the course of the campaign, an interesting pattern emerged. When the collaborators talked about the national parties, and to a lesser extent national leaders, they cited media sources of information. Interpersonal sources were cited when the collaborators explained their feelings towards local candidates.

Conclusions

On the surface, this investigation supported the findings of much of the past research into political information use. The media - especially television - were found to be more "popular" sources of information than interpersonal contact. This is a finding that has been reproduced in many different quantitative studies of mass audiences, and this research, using

limited assumption methods, found the same to be true for a small group of people in the 1993 Canadian federal election.

This does *not* confirm that the communication of political information is a linear process in which the media are a logical focus of study, however. While collaborators cited the media much more frequently, the way in which they talked about their sources of information showed distinct differences between media and interpersonal information.

Collaborators talked in a very brief manner about getting information from television. They did not spend a lot of time talking about things they had seen on television, and when they did, they tended to focus on superficial matters, such as the appearance and mannerisms of the leaders. This mirrors the findings of Graber (1989) that people tend to talk about personality traits of the candidates, not their policy positions.

The collaborators' reaction to interpersonal contact - especially with a local candidate - was much stronger. The encounters the collaborators related - some of which had occurred years earlier - obviously had a great impact on the way they thought about the campaign. The transition of Collaborator H from hardened cynic to Liberal booster, for example, was traced to a meeting he had with the local candidate and the favourable opinion of a friend.

Such events can be explained in terms of several models proposed to explain information use. Interpersonal contact could have been taken more

seriously by collaborators because the close contact allowed the entropy outlined by Shannon and Weaver (1949) to be minimized. It could also have allowed the participants to co-create a personal reality of the campaign along the lines of that proposed by Fiske (1987; 1989). Or personal contact could have made the message personally relevant for the collaborators, a condition of strong attitude change outlined in the Elaboration Likelihood model of Petty and Cacioppo (1981; 1986).

Whatever the reason the collaborators treated interpersonal contact, their attitude towards it may indicate that there is no substitute for reality. Perhaps "seeing be believing" when it comes to TV, but actual "experiencing" allowed the political information to which the collaborators were exposed to have an impact that was very considerable.

When the collaborators talked about the debate and the Chretien ads issue, they brought in a wide variety of information sources and related them, at least in some cases, in a highly unusual way. The way the collaborators wove together many different information sources was incredibly complex, and perhaps demonstrates that the evaluation of information is a process unique to individuals which would be very difficult if not impossible to measure and explain.

This follows the general findings of Graber's (1984) study of the 1976 Presidential election, in that individual perception may be difficult to probe using conventional survey techniques. The disdain her subjects had for the

American debates, however, was in marked contrast to how the collaborators in this study viewed the 1993 leaders' forum. Graber's panellists did not talk a great deal about the debates and did not hold them in high regard. She explained this by noting that an American Presidential election "campaign" goes on for many months, as candidates receive media exposure in the various state primaries. She posited that this overexposure led to fatigue in her panel group with the candidates and their platforms.

The participants in this research study did not exhibit a disdain of the debate. While they did speak about the combative nature of the event, they generally viewed it as a positive occurrence. The short time period of the Canadian campaign perhaps made the figures and policies less familiar to the collaborators, and consequently they did not have the time to grow weary of them.

The treatment of the Chretien ads by the collaborators also illustrates the difficulty in measuring the cognitive complexity of the collaborators. Prior to the ad controversy, many members of the study group talked with disdain about Chretien's accent and mannerisms, almost quoting verbatim the criticism that would accompany the ads themselves. When public outrage over the ads became apparent, however, the collaborators tended to go along with the opinion that the ads were out of line. This could be explained in terms of Festinger's (1957) cognitive dissonance, or similar theories of cognitive balance. The collaborators had no problem voicing

their negative opinions of Chretien, but when it was suggested that such opinions may have been incorrect, they may have changed their opinions of the ads or of Chretien himself.

The fact that the collaborators did not generally talk about issues that were popular in the media (with the exception of the Chretien ads and leaders' debate) supports earlier findings about media use in an election campaign. MacDermid (1991) noted that almost one-third of Canadians watched the news two or fewer times per week. The data that he cites from the 1988 Canadian NES also support a limited use of the media during an election campaign.

The collaborators' explanation of their barometer graphs illustrates the relationship between local/interpersonal and national/media sources of information. On one level, it is natural to assume, as Yum and Kendall (1988) and many other studies state, that all contact the voter has with national figures is through the media, as no other medium for contact exists. On a simple referencing level, this was borne out in the attributions of the study group.

But if the collaborators give much more "weight" to interpersonal contact, and they state that interpersonal sources of opinion influenced their feelings towards local candidates, then this may mean that interpersonal contact is one of the most important factors in evaluating local candidates. If this is so, the choice of local candidates by national parties is critical.

The direct encounters and secondhand stories of encounters that people may have had with candidates may be a deciding factor on which those candidates are judged. Policy positions and community service may matter little if candidates are judged by their past interactions with the friends and family members of voters.

The often unusual nature of the collaborators' information use may indicate that quantitative research methods have limited explanatory power when it comes to motivation. For example, a straight survey would have picked up many of the variables that influenced the collaborators. The dislike of Howard McCurdy by Collaborator A, the anti-abortion stand of Collaborator D, and the cynicism of Collaborator H, for example, would all have showed up in the polls conducted during the election. If the collaborators in question were classed as undecided, such variables could have been used to predict the way they may have voted, based on their relation to the issues.

The findings with the members of this study group supports Graber's (1984) caution about attempting to apply broad survey methods to the specific individual reality of voters. No amount of closed-answer questioning, for example, could have revealed the impact that one visit from a candidate had on Collaborator H, or the use of an apocalyptic pamphlet by Collaborator D to evaluate the debate. If the NDP campaign, for example, had polled Collaborator A and measured her dislike of Howard McCurdy,

they might have attributed it to party policy or McCurdy's stands on certain issues, for example, and not the angry exchange she had with him years before the election. It may very well be the case that the true motivations behind people's use and evaluation of political information are so hidden and uniquely personal that they will defy any explanatory frameworks.

Reflections on Methodology

This study adapted a new methodology, originally intended for case study research, to suit a longitudinal inquiry. Problems were forthcoming in the practical implementation and the data gathering instruments.

It was difficult to recruit collaborators to participate in the study. The researcher did intense phone canvassing for six days and was only able to get ten people to agree to participate. A consolation was the low dropout rate, as nine of the original ten collaborators saw the study through to its conclusion. This high level of participation may have been due to the approach of the method, which actively involved the collaborators in the relating of their own experience.

The adapted method approached the issue with as few assumptions as possible. Practically, this entailed using broad, non-leading questions so as not to predetermine the responses from collaborators. This was successful to the extent that the answers the collaborators did give were

their own, but the inability to ask direct questions had a distinct drawback. Often, the researcher would feel that the collaborators were implying something or holding back information, but the ability to clarify this was limited by the nature of the questioning to asking general questions about their feelings.

The nondirected questions also generated a large amount of superfluous information. While this is perhaps a necessary evil of research that aims to capture the social context of its collaborators, future application of the method should concentrate on a way to narrow the focus of inquiry while preserving the non-intrusive nature of the approach.

Telephone interviewing presented its own problems. The collaborators were very cooperative in setting fixed times during the week when they could be contacted, and were generally available at those times. The sound quality of the recordings, however, was sometimes quite poor due to phone or voice problems. Some collaborators had cordless phones while others developed colds or simply had low speaking voices.

The barometer graphs functioned fairly well in that they provided a prompt for the wrap-up interviews and valuable information about what information caused changes in opinion. It may have been the case, however, that many collaborators simply filled them out because they were obliged to, and did not give a great deal of consideration to how they were feeling. One collaborator had no explanation for the erratic readings in her

graphs, and others could not explain why their opinions changed or remained constant over the period of study. It may have been that they simply had no recall of why they felt a certain way at a definite reporting time. If this was the case, another data gathering tool, perhaps in the form of a diary or checklist, might have been more appropriate.

The cluster and forcefield exercises were intended in the original Collaborative Inquiry Methodology as primary data gathering tools. The longitudinal nature of the adaptation, however, made the interviews and the transcripts they generated the main sources of information in this study. The clusters and forcefields were used as insights into the collaborators' general perceptions and acted as a general check against the possibility that they would deceive the researcher. While the instruments worked well in this regard, they required a great deal of explanation to the collaborators in the final interview. Another longitudinal application might either simplify the instruments or substitute other schematic data collection tools to make the exercise easier.

Overall, the method collected valuable information on many aspects of information use, but was neither strong nor focused enough to delve into the deeper meanings of the trends that did become evident. For example, it was obvious that multiple sources of information were used by collaborators to evaluate the debate, but the adapted method could not investigate the possible relation that these sources had with one another.

All that being said, the adapted qualitative method used in this study did work. A great many of the findings mirrored parts of past quantitative work, and this confirmation was complemented by the information on the complexity of the collaborators' experiences collected through this method. The use of a low-assumption approach allowed this study was able to examine information use outside of the traditional assumptions which coloured much of previous research. In doing so, new methods of gathering information were field-tested in a new application, illuminating entirely new areas of study in the process. And while many of these areas follow tenets of previous work, this research presented some new information that may allow for further additions to the field.

Recommendations for Future Research

The findings of this study add interesting aspects to the study of political information use. While parts of this investigation could have been easily conducted using quantitative methods, the findings which hinted at the deeper motivations and reasoning of collaborators could only have emerged through a qualitative investigation.

Information is essential to the functioning of a democracy and any study which broadens our knowledge of how people use political

information, especially in the context of an election campaign, is of great value. Research needs to go beyond the confines of either-or models of processing or limitations of linear information flows, however, if academia is ever to gain a genuine insight into political communication.

This study took a wide look at how a small number of people experienced the 1993 federal election. The investigation was very broad, and touched on many areas related to political information use. While the results of the research confirmed the belief that the media are the main source of national political information, it did point out that the equation is not as clear-cut as some theories would have us believe. Information from interpersonal sources - especially information from direct interpersonal contact - was treated by collaborators in a manner entirely different from media information. The reliance of collaborators on the media for national political information and interpersonal sources for local information was also interesting - especially given that both sources were treated much differently by collaborators.

Such indications should be followed up using more powerful and focused methodological approaches. The findings of this research were broad and touched on many issues tangentially, and the trends which were highlighted - however subtle - should be pursued through more concentrated study.

For all the research that has been done in the past to explain how people use information, huge gaps exist in the field. Entire schools of theory can be seriously questioned because they subscribe to assumptions that have either not been proven or have simply been believed to function in a certain way without adequate supporting evidence. Methodologies are not the root cause of this, however. Quantitative and qualitative approaches are applicable in different circumstances, and are very valid tools of inquiry. Moreover, both methods can function in a complementary fashion. Small-scale qualitative research, being intensive and having little external validity, can illuminate deep trends within individuals that can then be examined through the application of carefully constructed quantitative methods.

The first task of research in a broad sense, however, should be to examine the assumptions that underlie it. If such assumptions have not been clearly supported in both qualitative and quantitative background studies, then the research should be designed to counteract the potential that assumptions may have to prejudice the outcome. Ideally, the researcher should have knowledge of a pattern in the reality worlds of individuals, and then move on to test certain aspects through whatever manner is appropriate.

Past research should not be treated with contempt or rejected out of hand. A great deal of wisdom exists in the attempts of academia to explain

social phenomena, and it should be the task of the researcher to incorporate such research into newer frameworks which help us better understand our society. It may very well be the case that social study is merely the act of imposing an ordering framework on something that is essentially beyond order. Society and its components may exist in a natural state of chaos, and any attempt to explain such anarchy necessarily involves the imposition of assumptions that cannot be proven. That this possibility may indeed be the case, however, needs to be seriously considered and investigated.

The individual is the most complex part of the information equation, evaluating and processing information through means and frameworks that are largely hidden to the researcher. Any attempt to explain how people use information has to first consider this complexity as a starting point for research. People, while complex, are valuable sources of information. When treated with respect, they are quite capable of relaying their own social experiences. Any attempt to relate these experiences should recognize this fact through the type of constructive cooperation that the CIM exemplifies.

The age has passed when social researchers could base their work on assumptions of media importance or the rationality of individual behaviour. A great deal more work is necessary, both in practical research and conceptual approaches to issues, if we are ever to fully understand a social behaviour as complex as political decision making.

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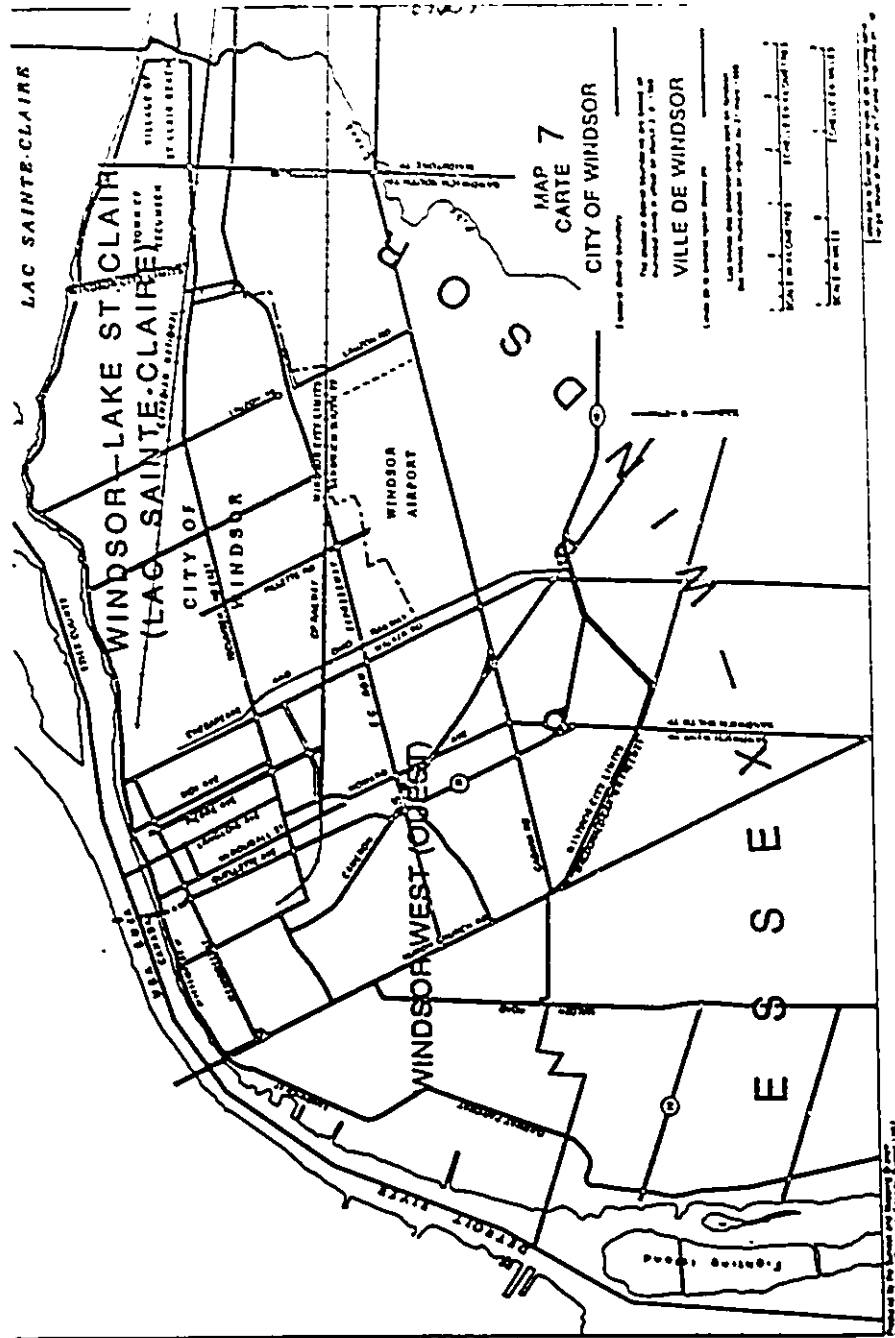
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APPENDIX ONE - MAP OF THE RIDING OF WINDSOR-ST. CLAIR



APPENDIX ONE (A) - RESULTS FOR RIDING CANDIDATES

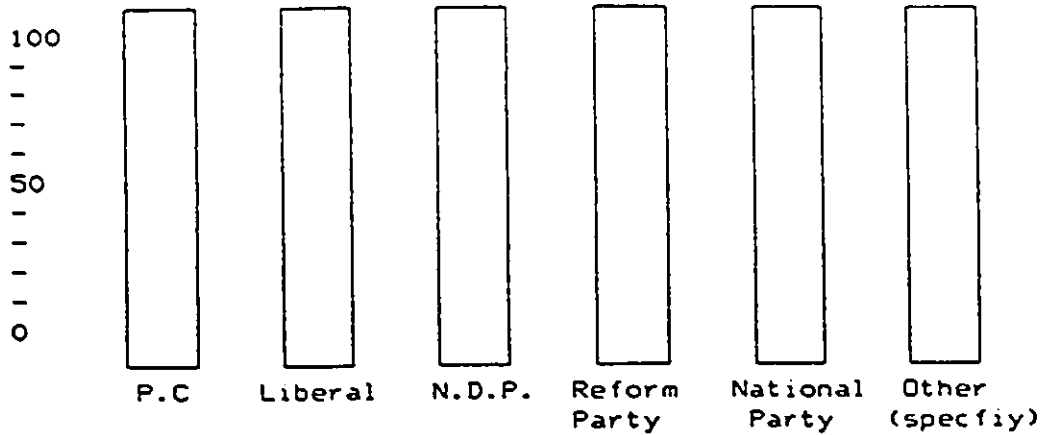
Shaughnessy Cohen (Liberal)	22,958
Howard McCurdy (NDP)	8,871
Tom Porter (PC)	4,553
Greg Novini (Reform)	4,153
Stephen Harvey (Green Party)	379
Stephanie Moniatowicz (Natural Law)	194
Dale Woodyard (Communist Party)	61
Ayesha Bharmal (Abolitionist Party)	52

(As cited in the Windsor Star, October 26, 1994, A3)

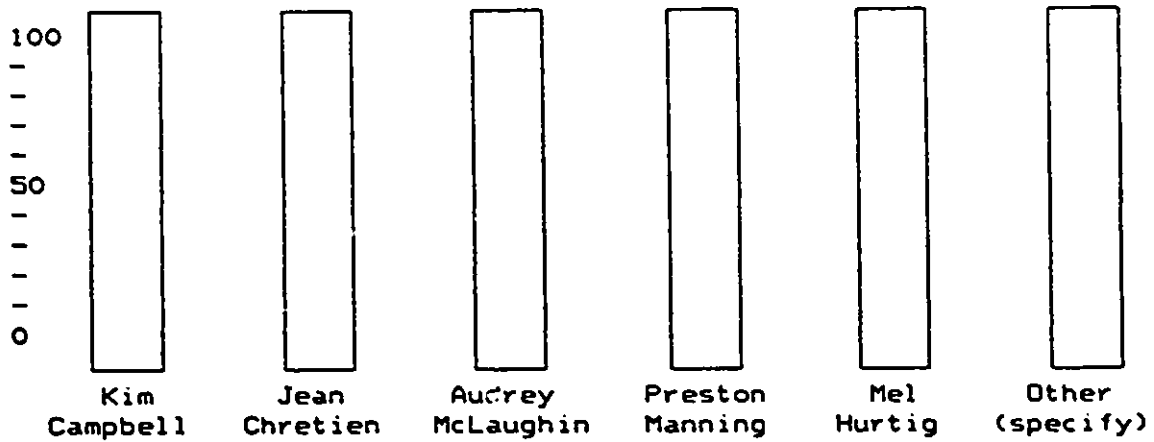
APPENDIX TWO (A) - BLANK BAROMETER CHARTS

OPINION INDICATORS FOR THE WEEK OF _____

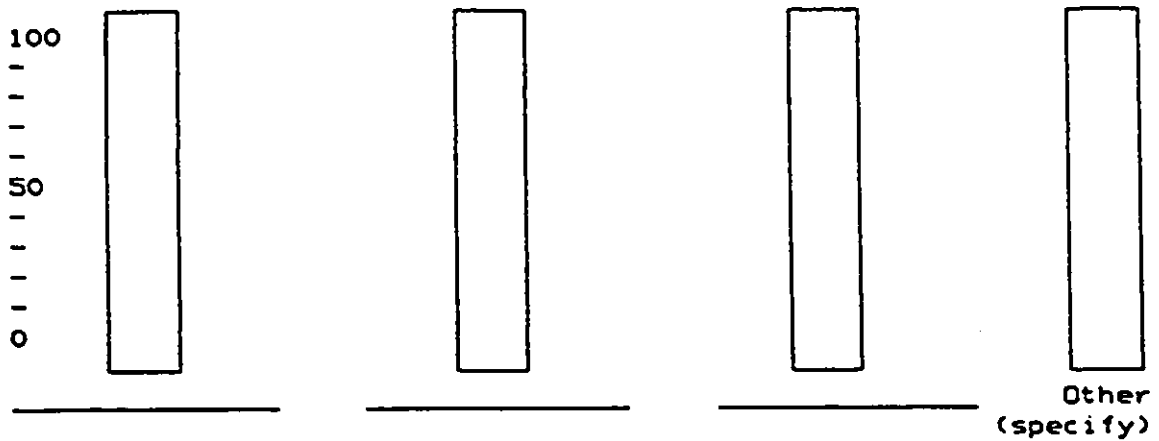
Party Performance



National Leaders

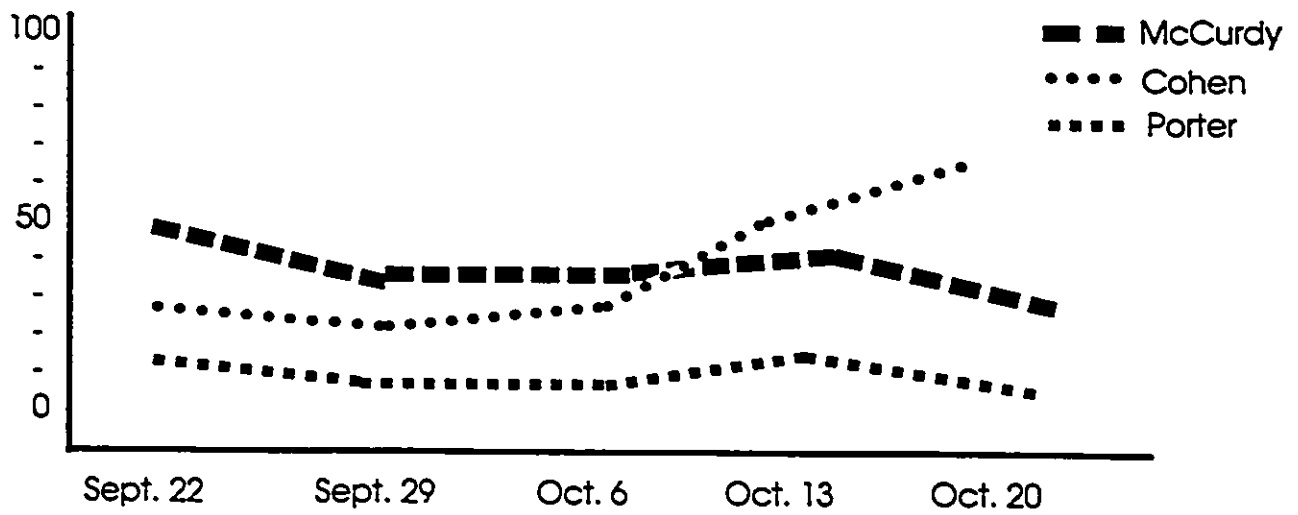
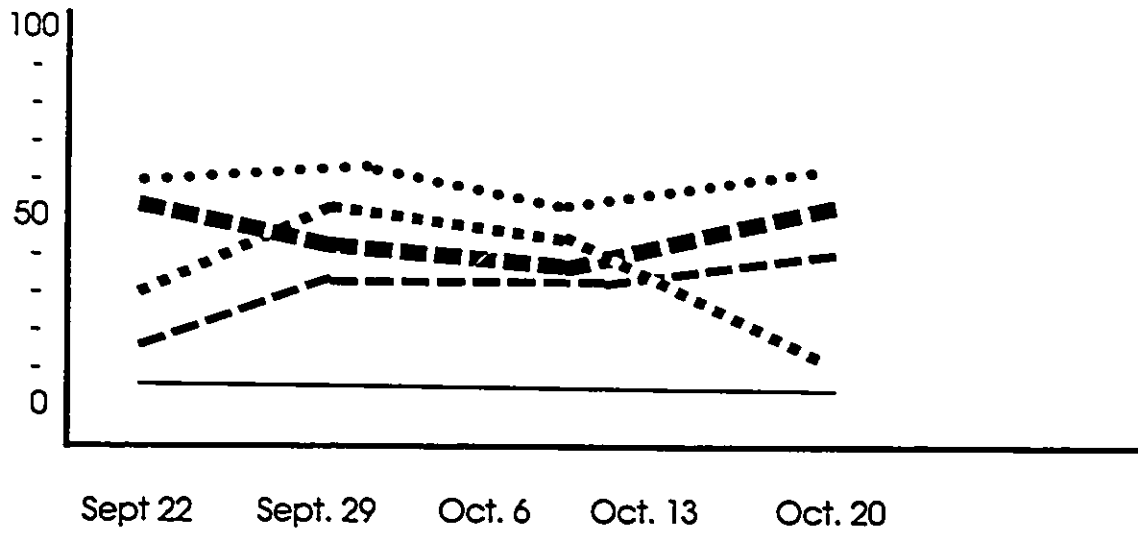
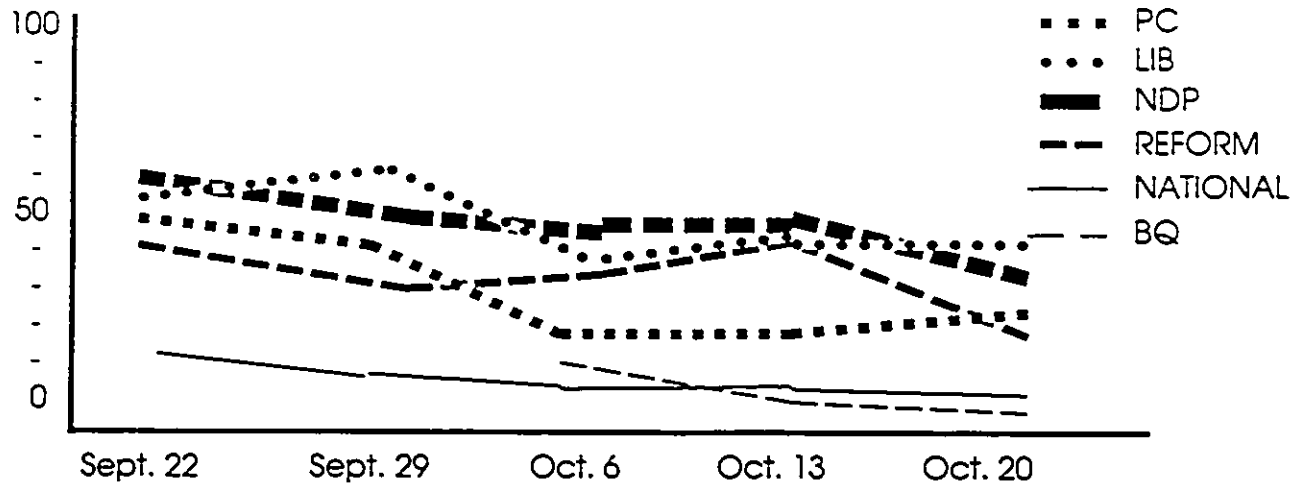


Local Candidates



Appendix Two (B) - A Sample Barometer Graph

Opinion Indicators for Collaborator E



Appendix Three - Collaborators' Guarantee of Ethical Rights

STATEMENT OF PARTICIPATION AND ETHICAL RIGHTS

1. The chief researcher for this project will be Alexander Gill, working under the supervision of Dr. Richard Lewis, Ph.D.
2. The general purpose of this study is to follow subjects through a federal election campaign.
3. The procedure used will be a series of open-ended, unstructured interviews, in conjunction with simple data sheets which you, the collaborator, will complete. In the interviews, I will not direct your train of thought by asking leading questions. I will, however, show you some procedures that may stimulate your thoughts on the subject. People find the interview interesting, and often find that the techniques make writing/organizing easier and faster in everyday life.
4. There will be no risk to you, the collaborator. There are no right or wrong answers, and any personal information that you do give will be kept strictly confidential.
5. With your permission I will use a tape recorder to record the interviews. I want a record of everything you've said, not just parts of it, and I don't want to have to interrupt your train of thought just to catch up in my notes. You will be allowed to talk at YOUR pace without interruption.
6. In any record that is kept of contact, you will be referred to by an assigned designation - such as "Subject A". Any personal data such as names, phone numbers and addresses will be kept strictly confidential. Other researchers will read portions of the transcript to verify the accuracy of my interpretation, but it will be virtually impossible for them to determine the identity of the individual collaborators.
7. You are entitled to read my written version of what was said and what I or another researcher identify as important. You may then indicate whether or not you feel that this is an accurate interpretation of your words. When I have analyzed all the interviews, you are entitled to an abstract of my findings. Your views and insights are important to me.
8. There will be no remuneration for participation in this project. This is not a funded research project, and any costs of producing the final report are borne entirely by the researcher.
9. Your participation is voluntary. You may refuse to answer any questions that you find objectionable - but the questions will generally not require detailed personal information.
10. This study has been approved by both my thesis committee and by the ethics committee of the Department of Communication Studies. Any complaint regarding procedure should be referred to the Head of Department at 253-4232 ext.2896.
11. I have read, and understand, the above information, and consent to participate in the study as described.

Signature Date:.....

APPENDIX FOUR - NATIONAL AND LOCAL ISSUES

The media monitored by the researcher which carried national stories were CBC television's Prime Time News, the Globe and Mail, and the CBC national radio news at eight a.m. A mix of national and local stories were also carried in the Windsor Star and on the CKCO Evening News, the local CTV affiliate.

Many national issues were covered in the media over the course of the campaign. Very few, however, were mentioned by the collaborators. The issues which were mentioned, even in passing, involved the following:

The EH-101 helicopter purchase: Previous to the election, the PC government had agreed to purchase 50 state-of-the-art helicopters for naval defense and search and rescue duties. This 4.8 billion dollar program drew resounding criticism, and Campbell announced even before the election that the order would be reduced to only 43, saving a reported 1 billion dollars. This was not enough to appease her critics, who contended that Canada could ill-afford such a luxury at the height of a recession. This issue dogged the PCs throughout the campaign.

Campbell's unemployment prediction: In the second week of the campaign, the Conservative leader's attempt at candidness was not well received when Campbell said she did not expect the unemployment rate to decline until the next century. Her remark and the reaction to it by the other party leaders was carried by all national media.

Chretien's "Red Book": On September 15, the Liberals released their comprehensive policy statement that was to become the centrepiece of their campaign. Amongst other things, the document outlined the Party's plans to reduce the deficit and create jobs through a 6 billion dollar infrastructure program.

PC deficit program: Following the release of the Liberal platform, Campbell announced on September 16 that her government would eliminate the annual deficit by the 1998-99 fiscal year. Details about the vague promise were not forthcoming, however, until the last week of September, prompting charges by the NDP of a "hidden agenda" to cut social programs.

Reform's "0 in 3" program: Announced on September 20, the Reform Party pledged to eliminate the annual deficit in three years. The announcement was

covered by all major media and was the centrepiece of the Party's free-time ad campaign.

Campbell's "issues" gaffe: In the attempt at straightforwardness that characterized her early campaign, the PC leader said that it was not the proper time during an election to talk about the issues. Her statement, made in the last week of September was lampooned as another example of Tory insensitivity, and forced her to apologize.

The leaders' debates: Two face-to-face encounters took place between the leaders of the five major parties. A French debate was held on October 3, followed by an English debate in the same location on October 4. The French debate was covered on CBC Newsworld, while the English debate was carried for two-and-a-half hours by the CBC main network. The debates contained many loud exchanges between the candidates, but no real conclusive knock-out punches. While there were no definitive winners and losers, the media put Chretien ahead after both encounters because he had failed to make any major mistakes. According to the Windsor Star, Campbell "lost because she didn't win", while Chretien "won because he didn't lose." The debate received extensive coverage in all media.

Pearson airport deal: In the first week of October, the Liberals announced that they would cancel a deal to turn Canada's busiest airport, Pearson International, over to a private consortium with connections to the PC party. The deal, valued at 1.6 billion dollars, was the subject of numerous newspaper editorials as well as radio and television news stories. Its critics charged that the government was favouring its friends with a "sweetheart of a deal."

McLaughlin admits Liberal majority coming: On October 14, NDP leader McLaughlin admitted that the Liberals would form a majority government. This later became the centre of the NDP's post-debate television ads, asking Canadians to elect effective opponents to the soon-to-be-governing Liberals.

McLaughlin "backlash" comment: On October 18, all national media outlets quoted the NDP leader as attributing the decline in her fortunes and those of Kim Campbell to the fact that both are women. The statement was discussed in all major national media.

Chretien ads controversy: With their electoral fortunes plummeting, the Conservatives aired two very negative ads attacking Jean Chretien on October 14. The ads featured unflattering freeze-frames of the Liberal leader's face accompanied by negative comments - on one ad from a commentator, on another from anonymous Canadians. The ads were featured in a story the same evening on CBC's Prime Time News, and received extensive coverage in all media the next day. Newspaper stories carried still photos of the ads with transcripts of the comments. The controversy became so great that Campbell immediately pulled the ads and apologized. Chretien, for his part, took the

high road and said that his "deformity" was a disability given from God, and was something he had learned to live with.

Numerous other issues which received coverage in the national media were not mentioned at all by collaborators. The Reform Party's candidate for York Centre, for example, stated that immigrants were taking jobs away from "...white people, gentile people." The issue, like many others, received extensive coverage for a number of days in all media, but was not mentioned by any collaborator.

Another issue that received little attention by the collaborators was the "Red Book" of the Liberals, the key platform in the party's campaign. After the election, the use of the plan to appeal to voters was cited by strategists as the key to the Liberal's win (W. Soderlund, Personal Communication, April 1994). Yet the collaborators in this study only mentioned it briefly during the campaign. More of them mentioned it in the wrap-up session, however, usually in their forcefields or clusters. While the reason for this is unclear, it may have been the case that the collaborators did not see the plan as central to the campaign as it evolved but were conscious of it when asked to look back over the election.

Locally, the media monitored by the researcher consisted of CBC Radio's Morningwatch, the Windsor Star, and the CKCO Evening News. There were comparatively few local issues which received media coverage that the collaborators mentioned. Those that did involved the following:

Signs issue: A front page story in the Windsor Star on September 22 showed how local New Democrats were downplaying their affiliation with the provincial party in their lawn signs.

McLaughlin visits Windsor: In the last week of September, the NDP leader addressed a rally to support local candidates at the Cleary Auditorium. Her speech received coverage from local and national media.

Local debates: Various local encounters between local candidates were carried in different media. Many meetings were open to all candidates, such as a "coffeehouse debate" at the University of Windsor that featured Shaughnessy Cohen and Tom Porter, amongst others. There was no face-to-face debate between all the candidates for Windsor-St.Clair, and the meetings that did occur received infrequent coverage in the local media.

Chretien visits Windsor: On the weekend after the ads controversy broke, Chretien spoke before a large Liberal rally at the Cleary centre in Downtown Windsor. The event received coverage from all local media, and was mentioned in passing on the national news.

Porter survey scandal: On October 7th, a story broke that volunteers for Tom Porter's campaign had been identifying themselves as researchers or surveyors working for the University of Windsor when doing phone canvassing. The issue received coverage in all three local media covered.

Vita Auctoris

Alexander Gill was born December 1, 1968 in Botwood, Newfoundland. He holds a combined B.A. (High Honours) in Political Science and Canadian History from Carleton University in Ottawa, Ontario. He has worked for various branches of the federal government and as a freelance writer and researcher, most recently in a study of negative political advertising associated with the 1993 Canadian federal election.